THE REVIVAL OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND from the 1960s to the present

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of De Montfort University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2002

Abstract

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The purpose of the thesis is to examine the significance of women's football in the context of shifting social values from the beginnings of the second wave of feminism to the present day. The argument begins with the premise that sporting practices are historically produced, socially constructed and culturally defined. The first chapter discusses the historiography of women's football and its influence on the contemporary sites of contested meaning. This includes the representation of football as the fastest growing female participation sport and as a game for rough girls. Britain pioneered the first phase of football's widespread popularity with women during, and shortly after, the First World War. The English FA found this threat to the male professional game sufficiently serious to 'ban' women's football in 1921. The revival of women's football in the 1960s as primarily a participatory activity (rather than as a spectator-supported sport) is still answering an agenda whereby gender difference is naturalised and fixed. For example, the International Laws of the Game provide for exceptions such as smaller pitches, shorter playing times and more substitutions which are based on the assumption that women players are physically less well suited to the game. The second chapter examines issues of tradition and community to assess why and how, for a century, inequitable conditions for male and female football players have widely been perceived as unproblematic at national or global level. The chapter suggests that there is an independent practice of English women's football which, in its most recent form, has become a centrally regulated, but essentially devolved and voluntaristic sporting activity. Consequently, the question of whether the Football Association (FA) can be seen as the most appropriate patrons of the supposed national sport is set against the self-governing

tradition of the women's game. The third chapter identifies wider aspects of British culture that have influenced the development of football for women. Legal and educational narratives of equality compare unfavourably with, for example, Scandinavia and the United States where there is some expectation of equity of result, rather than of opportunity. Therefore lottery-funded financial support is reliant upon a low level of recreational enagagement of large numbers of girls, rather than the professional employment of women football players. This does not reflect women's football culture which can be characterised at competitive level by regional networks of adult women players and administrators, some of whom are very serious about, and deeply occupied by, their sport.

At elite level since the 1960s women's football has some way to go to establish itself with a variety of audiences. The fourth chapter asks about memory and women's football and shows how sports culture has affected the presentation of the female participant in the media. The differentiation of women and men continues to be the implicit practice in parallel with a more recent move towards integrating women into the organisational structures laid down by men's football. Recent evidence taken from public memory demonstrates the difficulty of placing 'Women' in these infrastructures whilst privately-held memorabilia gives a sense of women forming long-lasting networks of competition and friendship through football and a relationship via the sport with the local community. This indicates a different form of integration and assimilation which, in turn, suggests the need to talk about with a wider range of group identities.

The fifth chapter is composed of the vivid narratives of players' experiences of football, overlooked in a historiography which emphasises the bureaucratisation of women's football since 1993. The women's football community as a whole has so understood

itself in opposition to the mainstream that the majority of players did not expect a significant change in the status of the sport. This pessimistic outlook appeared to be at odds with the optimism with which women pursued playing opportunities and this is significant in understanding the resonances of different perspectives on the issue of female play. Dismissing women's contribution to football at all levels has had the effect of reinforcing the idea of the superiority and rationality of males as experts at the expense of female players who appear to be recent consumers of a fashionable and central area of English popular culture. The thesis turns this framework on its head and sought to pursue the interests of the women players against the background of specialist, local and national media to show that one way of knowing about women's football is through the artefacts of the everyday.

In conclusion, the thesis began with the question, what kinds of evidence of women football players exists and how are we to collect and collate it? The project examines organisational processes and dynamics both from an elite point of view and from the frontline playing and administrative perspective in analysing the wide-ranging cooperatives that emerged as characteristic of the sport. On a wider scale, the role of coaches and education systems is particularly important, as are current legal practices because the inevitability of a professional football league for women in England is questionable. In addition, the use of professional associations and unions, such as the Football Writers' Association and Union of Sports' Writers, to prevent access by women to employment and networking opportunities gives another perspective beyond that of sport as physical game.

In summarising the development of the women's game, and the sport as a whole, as yet, there is no forum for women within the sport to express their shared experience in

authoring the future of their sport, though there are significant individual advocates of women's football. Whether some form of coalition would replicate the problems found in women's sport movements and international associations more widely remains to be seen. It is likely though, that without a definition from those within women's football about how they perceive the sport, the local, national and international identity will continue to be controlled by male-led administrations.

Calls to improve the image of women's and girls' football, for better media coverage and for more women representatives on administrative committees are continuities across the international community. The involvement of ex-players is a key growth area, as is the need for co-ordination of school-based sport. More controversially the possible age limit of mixed teams could be raised and genuine vocational opportunities provided to female players and coaches. Depressingly, at national level in England many of the same difficulties and stereotypes continue to affect the competitive and recreational game in 2002 as they did three decades ago. More encouragingly, large television and live audiences for Women's World Cup 1999 and the inaugural success of the professional franchise, Women's USA, are of considerable significance for women's sport generally and football particularly, not just in the United States. At elite level, there is evidence within England of an emergent professionalism and a degree of recognition of the female player as a skilled athlete. Volunteers, players and administrators invest an enormous amount of time and energy in female football-related activity. By making plain the value of participation, perhaps the sport could move toward a redefinition of its current status. It seems peculiarly inappropriate to use static models of football and 'women's football' in a world that has become more culturally plural. It would be promising to think that we had begun to move to an era where these kinds of constructs become redundant as the complexity of players' experience of football is developed.

Acknowledgements

A number of individuals have assisted me in the course of the research, writing and completion of this thesis. I owe a great deal to my first supervisor, Professor Pierre Lanfranchi, and my second supervisor, Dr Matt Taylor, who were both willing to join me on the journey into women's football even though, at the outset, the final destination was far from clear. Their contrasting styles of supervision meant that I had access to advice, criticism, encouragement and inspiration by turns. Though we agree that I do not think like a historian, we agree to differ about whether this is a good thing.

My largest debt is to the women, men, girls and boys who participated in the research. They gave up their free time and energy, principally to celebrate their love of football and I have tried to capture some of their altruism and animation here. Collectors of women's football memorabilia to whom I am indebted include Gail Newsham, Jane Ebbage, Dr Colin Aldis, Sheila Rollinson, Peter Bridgett, Angela Henson, Elsie Cook, Winnifred Bourke, Nancy Thompson, Ali Melling and Ruth Shuttleworth to name but a few. My coach mentor, Jim Kelman, also provided steadfast guidance and many an anecdote to aid my perspective. Janet Sharman helped with the layout and format of an early version of the typescript and I am thankful for Janet's expertise and goodwill.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially Simon. I could not have completed this project without the backing of my mother in the early stages. In the period of writing up I also lost a very dear friend and team-mate. I would therefore like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of Jean Wileman and Karl Lathbury.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIAW	Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women
CAAWS	Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport
FACA	Football Association Coaching Association
FA	Football Association (English)
FAI	Footbal association of Ireland
FAW	Football Association of Wales
FAWPL	Football Association Women's Premier League
FIFA	Federation International Football Association
IAPESGW	International Association for Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women
IOC	International Olympic Committee
LFAI	Ladies Football Association of Ireland
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
MLS	Major League Soccer
NAIA	National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
PFA	Professional Football Association
SFA	Scottish Football Association
SWFA	Scottish Women's Football Association
USSF	United States Soccer Federation
WCA	Women's Cricket Association

WFA	Women's Football Association
WFAI	Women's Football Association of Ireland
WNBA	Women's National Basketball Association
WRFU	Women's Rugby Football Union
WUSA	Women's United Soccer Association

CONTENTS

CHAPTER FIVE THE ORAL HISTORY OF PLAYERS

INTRODUCTION

'The Future is Feminine' declared Joseph Blatter, the General Secretary of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the international governing body of football, in 1995. This pronouncement in *FIFA News*, the official publication of the association, effectively included women players in the family of football on behalf of the worldwide community. At the same time, Blatter, arguably the most powerful man in world football at the time, was careful to distinguish their place within that family. Female players contributed

> A distinctive style of play, characterised by a certain elegance which has prevailed over a more robust impersonation of the man's game. [1]

If the place of the announcement was significant, so too was the timing. There had already been two Women's World Cups (China in 1991 and Sweden in 1995) and the inaugural Olympic women's competition at the Atlanta games in 1996. Blatter's epigram captured women's football as successfully established and with tremendous potential for growth but was otherwise vague. Any analysis of women's football has to go beyond attempts by FIFA and national associations to engineer female participation as a crucial challenge for the apparently confused bureaucracies is how best to deal with women as players. Should they be fully integrated into existing structures, should those frameworks be revised or should 'women' be treated as a distinct branch of the family tree?

Football is a highly visible aspect of popular culture in New Britain and against this background equal treatment for women players, never mind a feminine bias, appears a highly implausible description of it as a sport, business or cultural trend. The rights of fans, professionals and investors are widely debated in the academic and popular press. In contrast, the entitlements of women players and administrators are not generally discussed. Most British people could name a male football star whether or not they consider themselves to be enthusiasts of the sport. The majority of self-confessed football fans could not name a female player. The starting point for this research was to ask how we have arrived at this moment of obvious inequality. Such differences clearly pose a challenge to any assumption about football being either England's national game,

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[1] Joseph Blatter 'The Future of Football is Feminine' *FIFA Magazine* Zurich July 1995 Editorial. FIFA had published a number of articles before this but they were generally more neutral in tone, reflecting the experimental nature of the adoption of the female game and its staging, see, for example, *FIFA Report Women's World Cup China* Zurich 1991.

or the world's most popular sport. What we have instead are various communities of players, fans, investors, administrators and so on with significant points of reference. Some of these groups work professionally in football, others volunteer their time and interest and, of course, affiliation and alliance network across this divide. The following excursion into women's football considers participation at local, regional and national level against this broader topical context. Because *the* history of women's football in England has yet to be written and is beyond the scope of this kind of research, what follows is a much smaller and more discrete study. The following is an attempt to explain how communities of women football players are embedded within and interact across a surrounding cultural milieu which includes, but is also about more than, football as a sport or a business. The outcome is a complex sweep of responses to an apparently simple question, 'What do women think they are doing when they play football?'

Clearly, the method of investigation was a prime concern. To what extent is it possible to understand women's football by using the same concepts and methodologies used in studying men's football? What are the components of women's football that the researcher should compile at any given period? In terms of methodology, I have tried to capture what is evident at women's matches, be they tournaments and league fixtures or impromptu games. It is very clear on these occasions that there are diverse aspects of women's football created across complex amalgams of identity including the way that people dress, behave, talk and interact. Consequently, it is not appropriate to use concepts and methodologies that in any way collapse variety. By extension, it seemed out of place to introduce players via a series of labels as, say, 35 years of age, married with two children and living in the south. This will frustrate readers keen to draw conclusions about the social background of players but the intention is to simultaneously allow the participants to speak for themselves and, furthermore, to criticise simplistic attempts to characterise the women's football community.

So, this was not a search for a feminine style of play so much as a sense of the values, ideas and identities of women players. This consequently both obliged and determined a more holistic method of enquiry. There was no single archive to visit at the outset and my access to collections of data was, often very, indirect. Creating a network of contacts took a great deal of time and ingenuity. This provoked a more interesting question: What knowledge of women's football can be composed from the sources that are available to the researcher? The result mirrors the values and attitudes which English society has of women football players and also reflects the players', coaches' and administrators' voices. The thematic organisation emerged from characteristics

suggestive of a culture of women's football. A historian by experience or disposition may have a different view. At the conclusion of the project I am no more inclined to claim either of these things for myself than I was at the beginning. Nevertheless, the research borrowed from the repertoire of the professional historian including, for example, oral history. So the methodology reflects the topic itself in that it is a composite.

Ethnographic methods helped to make the familiar world of the players strange and enabled me to compare the world of the participants with representations of women football players. Quantitative evidence is also part of this story but a fairly minor dimension. It cannot, in itself, account for why women play football. Furthermore an emphasis on this kind of data adds little to our understanding of the critical issues in women's access to, and experience of, the game. For example, what has never been satisfactorily explained elsewhere is a peculiarly English expression of contempt for women who play football. A contemptuous attitude may not only exist in Britain and it is for another researcher to decide the precise role of the British in exporting the idea. Nevertheless this attitude has persisted in one form or another for at least a century but has been juxtaposed in the last forty years by snowballing female participation in an era of increasing international and domestic attention. The topic is overdue for attention because there is clearly more to women's relationship with football in England than academics have so far described.[2]

Though the major focus of the argument deals with contemporary events, an examination of the recent historical period would be incomplete without considering the early development of women's football. Britain pioneered the first phase of football's widespread popularity with women during, and shortly after, the First World War. The most eminent team, Dick, Kerr Ladies, travelled to Europe, Canada and the United States to play and live audiences of tens of thousands watched women's games. British women's football led the world at this time. The considerable spectator support and media interest from that era is noticeably absent in the present form. At home, since the 1960s, the support of spectators and the media is not a big part of the revival of women's interest but participation rates are considerably higher. At elite level, since the middle of the 1980s, the women's national team has gradually become less successful and other countries have progressively overtaken England in international influence.

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[2] Tony Mason *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* Brighton: Harvester 1980 outlines the formation of the Football Association and wider social history; Charles Korr *West Ham United: The Making of a Football Club* London: Duckworth 1986 for the role of the club in the local area; James Walvin *Football and the Decline of Britain*

The axiom that has come to describe British and international women's football over the last decade is that it is 'The fastest growing participation sport for women'.[3] This phrase first became widely used in the public relations material of the English Women's Football Association (WFA) at about the time it relinquished control of the female game to the English Football Association (FA). Since its formation in 1969 the association had been chaired by men who wanted the FA to acknowledge, accept and administer women's football. In spite of male leadership, the association had been formed on behalf of women and was mainly staffed by volunteers like Flo Bilton, Linda Whitehead and Sue Lopez. Internal disagreement meant that the WFA had acted as a pretty leaky umbrella for the sport, particularly when combined with financial difficulty which became acute in 1985. Members were repeatedly asked to leave

> The character assassination of bygone days to the past. Sadly for all of us it lingers on...we must start again and implement constructive policies. If we fail our number will decline further.[4]

In some senses 1992 could be interpreted as a watershed; the last of twenty-three years of WFA control before the FA took control of women's football and began to promote it. But in more significant ways it was a hand-over rather than a take-over. The WFA had gradually aligned with the structures of the male game, for example in 1991 the WFA had introduced a national league, the first in the history of English women's football. There seem to be two distinct but interrelated aspects of the idea of a fastest growing sport. The first is that it emphasises consumption: women are *doing* football in increasing numbers we are told. The ways that women own, use and appreciate football are not incorporated into this narrative. The second is that this superficiality tends towards a perception of recent female interest that has been successfully fostered by sporting bureaucracies. Neither helps to understand why and how women organised the majority of play before, or after, 1992.

I wanted to address the view that women's interest in football is a new phenomenon, specifically of the 1990s. Richard Holt's *Sport and the British* made a point about the place of sport in British culture which encapsulated my conversations with women who played in the 1920s, just as much as those in the 1990s. Holt's central theme is 'The extraordinary degree to which it [*sport*] has

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Basingstoke: Macmillan 1986; Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society 1910-1950* Manchester: Manchester University Press 1989.

[3] Cassandra Jardine 'The Boot's on the Other Foot' *Telegraph Magazine* 23 February 1992 p. 34.

been promoted privately... People have created their own kinds of pleasure through sport.'[5] How do women who choose, and have chosen, to exercise in this way view their sport? The many forms of women's participation suggested the need for a intricate account of the satisfaction of playing football. Blanket claims for a 'feminine future' and 'women's increased participation' imply that the experience of female players is in some ways similar. Did elite and competitive women and girls view themselves as part of a group of 'women football players' or as individuals?

A particular influence has been the work of Stuart Hall and cultural theorists who contend that identities are complex and changeable and so, wherever possible, the project has tried to counter the general with the particular.

> Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.[6]

In contrast to this multiplicity, characteristic expressions which prescribe football as essentially masculine are an enduring part of English culture. This can take many forms, for example, whether male or female, we learn at a very early age that to perform football 'like a girl' or worse, 'like an old woman' is something to be avoided: it is better not to play at all. Invariably parents, teachers and coaches insist on protecting masculinity even when appearing to defend female play. For instance, it is quite common to hear that twelve year old girls, who might be bigger and better players than their male counterparts, have been withdrawn from a mixed side 'for their own protection' or 'because it's an unfair advantage' because boys are too chivalrous to tackle a female or 'because she might feel like the odd one out'. The idea that football is an unsuitable game for 'ladies' has been given a contemporary form as girls who play are called 'tomboys' and women objectified as 'all lesbians'. The 'dykes' tag is both a homosexual inference, presumably because players change in the same room in order to play a sport involving contact and, besides, a reference to the common sense idea that lady-like women are not fond of football. Otherwise sophisticated females have, in this social fiction, an innate inability to

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[4] Tim Stearn 'Report on the Future Development of the WFA and The New Regional Set Up' *WFA News* London: Women's Football Association January 1987 p. 1.
[5] Richard Holt *Sport and the British: A Modern History* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989 p.346.
[6] Stuart Hall 'Introduction: Who needs 'Identity'?' in S Hall and P du Gay (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity* London: Sage Publications 1996 p. 4.

understand the offside rule which no amount of patient explanation can tutor. Thankfully, tired old remarks about women players sharing a post-match bath have faded thanks to health and safety regulations but the equally boring speculation about changing shirts has not quite died yet. Male players who clash are said to be drawing 'handbags' to question the authenticity of the conflict compared with fights which take place without rules and a referee. If the clash is particularly innocuous, the players draw their 'purses'. When what looks like a particularly promising shot is sliced high and wide the crowd will wolf-whistle to indicate feminized approval, as sarcastic disapproval of a male player's efforts. The unspoken insult, 'Good shot... for a girl!' takes us back to a logic where good female players are 'butch' and poor players of either sex are 'girly'.

Universal categories like 'women' 'girl' and, sometimes, 'lady' in idiomatic fabrications like those above are easily distinguishable from the narratives of female players. In the latter diverse and discontinuous responses suggest that players are performing and negotiating shifting identities, of which gender is itself a plastic element. Of course, strictly speaking, women cannot be said to exist and leading feminist thinkers would argue that categorizing gender enables oppression to be structured along dual lines.[7] However, to date, the experiences of women players have not been discussed nearly enough and the project articulates some perspectives of the contributors to that community. It is intended as a departure, rather than an arrival. So the oral testimonies are not an attempt to re-describe football from the point of view of women because there is not a singular normative vision of a shared cultural reality that is 'women's football'. Acknowledging the theoretical insufficiency of categorization is one point of the position that is defended throughout this work and this critique is, if anything, developed by collecting the views of women players together. However it can only be a starting point in a longer process. In connecting the stabilized and polarized fabrication of gender difference to women's experience of football during the research process, the tensions between private and public sources became increasingly apparent.

Previous accounts of women playing have fallen into two categories. The first correlate the bureaucratisation of women's football with progress.[8] The second focus on the contentious

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[7] Julia Kristeva (ed. by Leon S. Roudiez; trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez) *Desire In Languag : A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* Oxford: Blackwell 1981 p.56.
[8] Richard Holt and Tony Mason *Sport in Britain 1945-2000* London: Blackwell 2000 p.12; John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' in *British Football and Social Change: Getting into Europe* John Williams and Stephen Wagg (eds.) Leicester: Leicester University Press 1991 p.100.

aspects of women's ability to play football.[9] There have also been a few very useful discussions of body image and sexuality.[10] The lack of archived evidence indicates new questions, for example why is the number of women who play football important to particular agencies and individuals? There is considerable difficulty in knowing how many female players we are talking about at any one time. What is the relationship between the enthusiasts and the governing body of the day? There remains no single collection for women's football. The WFA archives were misplaced at the point of take-over or otherwise unavailable to me. Records are scattered in various private collections and so it is perhaps unsurprising that some academics suggest that there has been little say about women's football. Oral history sources became ever more valuable as the investigation progressed. Administrators, players, coaches and supporters of the women's game have been enormously generous with their time, opinions and access to personal collections throughout the study. If identifying primary source material led to many a cross-country paper chase, the warmth of the reception always made the journey worthwhile. The question of a community of women players with traditions and shared memories has been pursued throughout the research. It became increasingly possible to talk about the construction of collective identities but remained difficult to find examples of the transmission of imagined communities of women players in social and public memory. Some women just play, some also remember those who played in the past. Only a very few commemorate, write about and discuss past and present players.

The wealth of documentary evidence in private collections included official reports, minutes of meetings, newspaper and magazine articles and photographs. Personal memorabilia included scrapbooks, programmes, correspondence, medals and other mementoes. Participant observation, supplemented by interviews and questionnaires made it very clear that this would be a journey into women's football. The only interviewee who came to see me was a male professional player. My rewards for going to see the players included the opportunity to observe candid practices that were, by and large, celebratory. If women's relationship with their chosen sport was sometimes problematic, they were determinedly optimistic in pursuing solutions. The voices of the players are spread throughout the thesis. Some of these players suggested the idea of a revival of women's football and others were unaware of the previous popularity of the sport. Either way,

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[9] Tom Reilly 'Physiology and the Female Footballer' *Insight: The FA Coaches Association Journal* Issue 3 Volume 4 Summer 2001 pp. 26-29 is representative of this approach. Reilly devotes a third of the article to detailing the menstrual cycle as a possible factor in affecting female sports performance generally and football particularly.
[10] Kari Fasting et al. 'Women Playing Soccer – Experiences from Europe' *ICSSPE Bulletin* No 25 Berlin 1998 pp. 38-39; Jayne Caudwell 'Women's Football in the United Kingdom: Theorizing Gender and Unpacking the Butch Lesbian Image' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* Vol. 23 4 November 1999 pp. 390-403.

because of the general perception of football for females as untraditional, the place of the past in women's actions in the present became a recurring motif. Women's interest in football has been perceived in the public domain to be an aspect of modernity.[11] Overall, the contributors to this research encapsulated an apparently contradictory aspect of women's history: The players of the present era have had, in some crucial respects, to pioneer women's right to participate all over again. This has led to different structures of organisation from the early popularity of spectator-supported events and yet many playing practices endure, so the broader analysis will raise questions about why and how women's football remains materially and discursively marginalized.

Players were not the only ones to suggest the place of the past in the present was important. The secondary sources also suggested that this was a debate that had to be opened. The ambiguous status of women's football was evident in the ban by the English FA from clubs affiliated to the association and Football League grounds from 5 December 1921 to 29 November 1971.[12] The quasi-legal terminology of a 'ban' reflects a social taboo that is more enduring. Nevertheless, for over a century some English women have spent many a dull hour on administrative tasks in order to make female football competitions viable. The families of those involved must also necessarily be affected by players' commitment to the game, though participants are more likely to incur costs than financial gain. What makes all this effort worthwhile? The term women's football operates sometimes as a metonym for the belief that female play *is* and *should be* different to male football. This is crucial to the way that women players are treated but how fundamental is it to their perception of the sport?

Who are the women players? Who are the other stakeholders in this future? Should supporters of women's sport, football particularly, be encouraged by the implied inevitability of Blatter's claim? Some elementary points of reference have been established in this thesis and the overall tone is one of cautious optimism when dealing with the construction and representation of a culture of women's football in England. The discussion begins by developing the existing historiography pertinent to women's football. The expression of difference is one of the theoretical issues that had to be considered. In terms of analytical perspective, I wanted to

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[11] Lord Justice Taylor *The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster (15 April 1989), Final Report* London: HMSO 1990 for comments concerning the civilising influence of women supporters and family enclosures; Jackie Woodhouse *A National Survey of Female Football Fans* Leicester: University of Leicester 1991 gives a quantitative study of the numbers and formation of the female audience inside and outside the stadium.

[12] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* London: Scarlet 1997 p. 254; David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* Devon: R&D Associates 1991 p.25.

illustrate the premises on which this division seems to be predicated. Gender as socially constructed is a factor in an individual's experience of the supposed national game of England from, for example, school-based sporting policy to segregated employment opportunities. Other elements are also clearly vital to the consideration of women's experience. Since football in its various forms is so clearly constructed to protect male dominance gender and patriarchy are useful frameworks for analyzing women's play. However, the role of social class was more difficult to assess. In the first phase of popularity a defining aspect of women's play was access to relatively well paid work outside the home and the consequent opportunity to pursue collective leisure. Women's football certainly shared aspects of English working-class leisure generally in that it was born of collective enthusiasm, largely neglected and unregulated by authorities until recently and continues to have a dubious social status. However the women who play do not, by and large, express a feeling of class awareness or compliance or political responsiveness as a result of their engagement. However they are treated in football as a group and categorised by gender so some form of collective consciousness must exist, though they did not present their play as oppositional to any kind of dominant practice. So the historiography is evaluated in order to test the myth that women have had precious little interest and involvement in football until the 1990s. Whatever social, cultural and economic foundations to this view, women's play is hardly reflected in the literature of women's football, female sport or football more broadly.

The second chapter includes players' diverse experiences at elite, competitive and recreational level to outline the disputed areas of community and control. The lack of schoolgirl football in England until the present day cannot be overstated in preventing the expansion of the sport for the many, from which the few could emerge. Until recently women players who had not participated in organised football at school outnumbered girls in regional leagues. This sounds rather bleak but the style of football administration arranged by women was functional and until the middle of the 1980s very successful, both in international and domestic terms. In the last decade the FA have proposed educational settings as the most suitable place to increase numbers and to develop elite players. In contrast, in regional leagues the pragmatic and adult culture endures. More forceful demands for better playing conditions, better training and acceptance have yet to be co-ordinated on any great scale. Players have been more concerned with participation than in forming pressure groups. Consequently, play is embedded in a context of national, regional, ethnic, religious and linguistic affiliation and the expression of identity as women are always in the process of translating and mediating identities. If this part of the work celebrates an element of appropriation of football for women's own purpose, the third chapter is far less encouraging

because the attitudes and actions of individual female players and coaches are placed in the broader scope of professionalism in football.

The economic, geographical and cultural marginality of women means that the rise in participation has yet to translate into the widespread popularity of spectator-supported female play. The third chapter opens out the discussion to look outside football as a sport and a business in order to consider what is going on within it. By looking at the meanings that are given to football in schools, in equal opportunities legislation and in segregated employment opportunities for men I'm suggesting a shift towards wider questions about British culture. The marginalisation of women in football has yet to be contested in any sustained and systematic way, even by players themselves. How do the male/female and heterosexual/homosexual 'roles' and stereotypes that can be found in football translate into other, broader patterns of practice? What key aspects of this wider picture affect the potential professionalizaton of football for women and how will gender, sexuality and the taboos around mixed contact sport create patterns which shape the presentation of women players to a potential audience? A persistent feature of the scorn shown women who play football in England is the idea of transgression. Playing an essentially male game is argued to be a masculinising process.[13] In answer to the question 'Do you regard women's football as a separate sport to men's football, as a related sport, or the same sport?' the following answers reflect two ways in which women negotiate a feminine form of football.

> Separate, because not many male teams actually come into contact with the women and don't do anything for the female game.[14]
> I class it as the same game as it has the same rules. I think though men's and women's football is played in two different styles.[15]

In most respects women are willing to reproduce the structures of male football because the frameworks appear far in advance of the women's game, from mass participation to professionalism. The rise of women's football since the 1960s has undoubtedly been affected by the increasing professionalism of male football during this era. An example of this has been England's recent revision of coaching qualifications, in line with other European countries. One element of the study has been to quantify the effect of the change by tracing the number of women attaining each level of qualification over a four-year period by county of award. The

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[13] Brian Glanville 'Goals and gals don't really mix' *Sunday Times* 24 June 1973; Jeff Powell 'Sorry Ladies, you can't win a man's game' *Daily Mail* 30 January 1996.
[14] Non-elite questionnaire 25.
[15] Elite questionnaire 12.

number of qualified women coaches has declined in the late 1990s and is a stark contrast to the rise in the number of women players.

The fourth chapter explores memory to ask how can we identify and discuss the culture of women's football in England? There is a rather obvious point to make that the invention of custom and memory to transmit folklore has been central to the growth of men's football. This has accelerated since the formation of the Premiership so that the business of football can embrace all manner of consumer products where tradition and memory are given visible and audible form, from retro shirts to playing the Post Horn Gallop when Leicester City run out of the tunnel to name but two. My point in pursuing this is not to indicate the gulf between the two: it is that this situation is symptomatic of broader social relations and beliefs about what women's relationship to football has been, is and should be. What kinds of memory can be constructed and represented? The aim is, first of all, to focus on the structures which shape memory and so the chapter discusses activities that are devalued when women's involvement is reduced to a question of novelty or number. The second intention is to see if any distinct elements thread through the different case studies. How are the practices of various kinds of football for women outside of, and also an intervention into, the public consciousness?

The fifth chapter draws on oral sources to lay down some markers of players' diverse experiences at elite, competitive and recreational level. In summary, the general point is that to comprehend the place of women's football in contemporary society it is necessary to consider the broader patterns that intersect with it. So the focus of the work is specifically about the construction of a women's football culture, but it is also about women's football within English culture. The 'politics' of football have been discussed as a struggle of consumption and production both inside and outside the corporate entertainment industry. In analysing both the past and the potential for women's football in the future then, the consequences of increased bureaucratic monitoring and intervention have to be set alongside the large degree of independence that the majority of players and administrators have enjoyed because this interference is so very recent. Women's football has been experienced in various ways: as a form of collective leisure, as a sports community and as an administrative category to name but a few. Women players have invented and defined football in specific forms, spaces and places. The distance between these sites and the interests and agendas of the bureaucrats is an issue that the project begins to address and one that future researchers will refine.

The players who took part were drawn from women's teams in England based in one of the National Leagues and four of the Regional Leagues, in schools and universities or, for example the police, the army, and hospitals. Some clubs were created to express the sexuality or race of the participant. In some teams the majority of players were gay. Jennifer Hargreaves, in her recent study *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* used the term 'members of a predominantly lesbian soccer team'.[16] Her comments regarding the difficulties of labelling a variety of sexual identities accurately and discussing the sexuality of participants in the research process struck a chord. The four teams overtly and positively celebrating lesbian identity who agreed to be part of this study suggested it would be a problem to propose that all the players registered for those teams identified themselves as non heterosexual. As the chapter on Sporting Lesbians in Hargreaves' book makes clear, gay sport is not a unified phenomenon.[17] Nor are individual gay identities fixed and constant, as Jayne Caudwell explores in her work.[18] An example of the difficulties facing openly lesbian teams came from Planet Barcelona, which developed out of a Stagecoach works' team where some of the players were drivers. Homophobia forced the club's closure after only one year.[19]

Another particular issue was the extent to which race, religion and culture affected participation. It was not possible to locate a black or Asian female club, though youth club teams where white players were a minority were willing to participate. The racial mix of these youth club teams was reflective of the surrounding area and so it is not possible to argue that they were founded to express a racial identity.[20] Rather, black and Asian players appeared to form significant minorities in teams at elite, representative and competitive levels. The FA has used school-based teams with mainly Asian players for public relations purposes.[21] It was difficult, otherwise, to be more systematic in ascertaining the racial mix of teams. Playing with and against Muslim women reinforced my view that participation is very much an individual choice. Women who chose to be more modest in their dress were able to maintain a covered head and to wear loose clothing from head to foot in women-only and mixed situations. A similar difficulty occurred in identifying and defining disabled players though participant observation enabled me to be aware of those who were partially sighted, had learning difficulties, had partial hearing, suffered epilepsy, wore

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[16] Jennifer Hargreaves *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* London: Routledge 2000 p. 137.
[17] Jennifer Hargreaves *Heroines of Sport* pp.129-174.
[18] Jayne Caudwell 'Women's football' p. 393.
[19] SC, Stagecoach/ Planet Barcelona FC player 1998/1999, Sheffield 18 May 1999.
[20] JO, Youth worker and FA Coaching Certificate Candidate, The Rugby Clubs Youth and Commuity Centre London 14 May 1998; RM, Youth worker and coach, Seaton Court Youth Centre Bristol 26 May 1998.
[21] The Football Association 'Developing Asian Girls' Football' *On the Ball* May 2001 p. 6.

prostheses and were subject to a number of temporary conditions from detached retinas to broken backs. In open competition the youngest player was fourteen but it is not uncommon for players to continue into their forties in regional leagues. As Sheila Rollinson, a long-time player and administrator noted 'Our back four have a combined age of 128.'[22] The oldest player in the sample was fifty-two.

The term 'player' therefore refers to a female who is either registered with the FA or signed formally to a team. However, in the case of school-age girls, participation in organised football under tuition, either in curricular or extra-curricular sessions is included. Useful perspectives to supplement the players' views are drawn from international, national and regional administrators, coaches, medical staff and managers of women's teams. Women officials are not extensively considered. Though they participate on the field of play, it is not the physical prowess of the referee that is important so much as the ability make decisions. The recent policy in the Women's World Cup to appoint only female officials obviously gave those selected valuable international experiences but it also delineated women's football as a sphere for women. It will be as revealing to see how many female officials are chosen for the 2002 men's World Cup in Korea/Japan. Women supporters to the male game and women who work in the football industry, except in cases where they are also players, coaches, officials or administrators in women's football, fall outside the remit of this study. Nor does it seek to chart the chronological growth of the women's game in this country.[23]

The emphasis on organised and affiliated teams is intended to assess the extent to which female players own competitive football in England for women. The problem with this approach is that it discounts the purely recreational player. This is treated as an issue in itself. For some players at all levels integration with the FA is problematic as it represents an acceptance of the centralised administrative bureaucracy that was historically dismissive of women's football. In some

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[22] Sheila Rollinson, League administrator, player and coach since 1978, Sandiacre18 June 2000.
[23] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* gives an account of the early development of women's football; Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* details developments in the last three decades both nationally and internationally; Gail Newsham *In a League of Their Own* London: Scarlet Press 1998 focuses on Dick, Kerr Ladies, later Preston, one of the most enduring and successful women's clubs between 1917 and 1964 and Alethea Melling *Ladies' Football: Gender and the Socialisation of Women Football Players in Lancashire 1916-1960* unpublished PhD thesis University of Central Lancashire November 1999.

recreational settings there is resistance to the practice of segregating the sexes, including women who play for park's teams.[24]

The sample included ninety-eight questionnaires and seventy-five interviews.[25] Participant observation became crucial both in testing the accuracy of quantitative surveys and to experience the essentially transitory nature of many games, tournaments and administrative arrangements.[26] As one woman said, after a training session in June which involved playing against youngsters in a park, approximately fifteen a side,

> On nights like this it's great. Men couldn't get away with this, playing against kids. It's good training because they are fast, skilful. But with paedophiles and that (shrugs) men couldn't...and they wouldn't anyway.[27]

The first point of contact for the players in the FA leagues and for those in specialist teams was a questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews lasted for approximately ninety minutes, preferably in the home of the player but on neutral ground if not. The number of clubs from which England players are drawn is so small that specific allusions could jeopardise the confidentiality of the research and so players' initials have been used. Additional testimonies were gathered from a Canadian female international referee who mainly works in the male game and a recently retired Dutch international player now employed as a national coach. Collectors of women's football memorabilia to whom I am indebted include Gail Newsham, Jane Ebbage, Dr Colin Aldis, Sheila Rollinson, Peter Bridgett, Angela Henson, Elsie Cook, Winnifred Bourke and Ruth Shuttleworth.

Feminist researchers in sport have raised the problem of reflexivity and suggested that academics should not hold power over the subjects of research by withholding information about the

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[24] Alyson Rudd *Astroturf Blonde (It's a Man's Game – Sometimes)* London: Headline 1998 and the paperback version of the same text *Astroturf Blonde: Up Front and Onside in a Man's Game* London: Headline 1999 for a park player's experience, including her criticism, and subsequent rejection of, women's football.

[25] Interviewees include six of the England squad and were selected for a spread of age, geographical origin, geographical present location, race, international playing experience, family circumstance and occupation. At club level, additional considerations were a balance of those drawn from urban and rural areas and noteworthy examples, such as the army and other service teams. There were three important strands to the interviews; the factual reporting of personal details; comments on personal identity in relation to control of a responsive body; team play and the perceived local and international effects of the dominant discourse on women players.

[26] Donna Woodhouse *The Post War Development of Football for Females: A Cross Cultural and Comparative Study of England, The USA and Norway* Unpublished PhD University of Leicester 2001 in this recent FA commissioned project at the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research certain findings need to be treated with caution. Surveys in 1998 found that Lou Waller was the most popular player amongst fans of women's football. One of the two grounds surveyed was Millwall and Lou is a Community coach in local schools in that area. Given that entry to the match at which the survey was distributed was free to children, who constituted three quarters of the crowd, this possibly meant a disproportionate number of local youngsters were represented in those sampled.

[27] LW, player, Loughborough 23 June 2000.

research process.[28] Memorabilia was particularly valuable when discussing public, familial and private memory. In asking about a tradition, community and memory of women's football photographs, postcards, medals, cups, trophies and clothing remain precious links between the past and the present, especially since many of those who played in the 1920s have died. Items enable comparison with the kinds of images, souvenirs and equipment produced in relation to the sport today. The discussion of these items helped to overcome the mistrust of me as an outsider. Being a woman player was enough to allow me access to groups of women players and to establish a warm dialogue but my role as researcher created some suspicion and resistance, especially nearer to the central administration. Such is the hold of the stereotype of transgression that many women players appeared obliged to present a respectable image. The compilation of many voices in women's football, of which mine is one, was crucial to this method. Aware of my privileged position as author, the points of difference between players and myself has been made explicit in the analysis. One of the ways this has been developed is to show how narratives of rights and recognition have become formed in women's football. Players have been more concerned with participation than in forming pressure groups. For the researcher this posed a problem because of the dynamic with the participants. If they disavowed a support for feminism generally and specifically for developing a rights approach to (and through) football, how could their contributions be used to do just that? My response is to display the various opinions to suggest that women have not yet developed a sense of continuity and of history that is consonant with their contribution to the culture of football. This is part of my reciprocal relationship with the players and intended to enable the beginnings of a more widespread awareness of women players. Second, the argument outlines the systematic exclusion of women from positions of power within football as an industry and proposes alternative strategies in order to take the debate forward. Above all, it suggests that major alterations are required to the way we think about gender in football.

The question of an international women's football culture is pertinent but beyond the scope of the discussion.[29] During the research, opportunities to look closely at other experiences were especially useful. Visits to Namibia (1998) and the United States of America (1999 and 2001)

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[28] M. Ann Hall *Feminism and Sporting Bodies: Essays on Theory and Practice* Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics 1996 suggests methodological strategies for pursuing research; Pat Griffin *Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport* Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics 1998 discusses the role of the researcher and subject.

[29] Fasting et al. 'Women Playing Soccer' involves Kari Fasting (Norweigan University of Sport, Oslo), Sheila Scraton (Leeds Metropolitan University UK), Gertrud Pfister (Frei University, Berlin) and Anna Bunuel (Institute of Madrid); Alethea Melling *Ladies' Football* compares French and English women footballers pre 1960; Donna Woodhouse *Post War Development of Football for Females* examines Norway and the USA.

enabled me to see how women's football was spoken about, played, marketed and treated by the media in both countries. Three points arise from these comparisons. The first is that, in worldwide women's football England is at best a middling contributor to the development of the game. The prominence of Scandinavian countries in elite women's play reinforces the point that practices in England are only partially representative and successful. The second aspect is the policy of football's governing bodies to downplay conflict but to emphasize gender difference. Practices vary a great deal, so whereas the Oceania Football Confederation has a woman as General Secretary, in Algeria women have recently contested their first national competition. The third dimension of international women's football culture is the determined interest and pleasure that women players take in participation.

Primarily women have mobilised their claims to sport by forming women-only clubs, but have integrated into bureaucratic organisations. However, whether elite, employed developers have properly represented the needs of the majority of voluntary participants without whom women's football would not function in its present form, is debatable. The project has attempted to make plain the configuration of patronage and selection by which some women join policy-making elites. In England, the self-image of those accepted by the authorities has to be subsumed to the public image of the bureaucracy. At international level, in this respect, the English case is typical. In combination, the rare, but considerable, achievement of exceptional women questions the outlook as in any way universally female-centred.

The inaugural Cup of African Nations (CAF) Women's Championship in 1999 marked a moment when all football confederations had sponsored international female competition. The 3rd FIFA World Championship for women, in Los Angeles 1999 saw the largest live audience for a women-only sporting event with over 90,000 spectators. A professional women's league, Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA), was launched in 2001 owned largely by television companies. However, flourishing interest and encouraging changes hardly constitute women's participation in football as sufficiently commonplace and significant to mark a new dawn. The marginalisation of women at administrative level and lack of widespread support for women players mean that fundamental issues of control are as contentious now as they have ever been. More striking still is that women's lack of equality in this area appears to be taken for granted by some women players and by elite administrators. The following chapter discusses the historiography to debate the relationship between changes in quantity and changes in quality of women's football. In one sense, the story of perpetual expansion is unthreatening to the football

authorities because a change in the number of players has yet to alter the essentially amateur nature of the female game. The comparative historical summary illustrates that there has been a widespread tendency to devalue the place of women's football in studies of the sport, women players in their own game and, by implication, participants in sport. The use of the title 'Perspectives on Women's Football' indicates that none of the commentators has dominated a field marked by overlapping and competing agendas. In the midst of this debate, of what should be done on behalf of women, or by women or, indeed, to women to develop the game, the players' voices have begun to emerge and will become much louder as the thesis progresses and, it is hoped, beyond. Excerpts like the following suggest that at present the agenda is rather static and in need of revision:

> I came from a little village where my brother had a sports outfitters and at Christmas, they gave me footballs... For my tenth birthday he got me a pair of football boots and stood me in a bath of water to make them shrink to fit. I stood for an hour in freezing cold water... I was so proud.

CHAPTER ONE

PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN AND FOOTBALL

1. Introduction

The most frequently discussed aspect of women's football in England in the 1990s is the growth in the number of participants. For example, Richard Holt and Tony Mason suggest that there is evidence of a recent, rapid expansion to over four thousand women's teams under FA control.

> Women's football...grew dramatically in the 1990s. The number of women's teams rose from 500 to 4,500 from 1993 to 2000 and the FA announced plans for a professional women's league along the lines of that in the United States.[1]

A decade before, Williams and Woodhouse had also related the rise in participation to patronage from the football authorities, including Premiership and Football League Clubs, the Football Trust and the English FA.[2] However merely quantifying women's participation does little to reveal the complexity of the players' experience and demonstrates an unwillingness to engage with multiple realities.

Attempts to establish numbers of players, teams and clubs in women's football from the 1960s to the present have been difficult. For example the number of girls' teams was immediately doubled by the introduction of Small Sided Football (in which players under 11 are not permitted to play in teams of more than 7 a side) in 1998. Even so, Holt and Mason's 4,500 teams overestimate the approximate number by at least threefold. The FA web-site in 2000 had the figures at 700 women's and 750 girls' teams.[3] In 2001 it had a generous 700 women's and 1,000 girls' teams.[4] How many women are we talking about as football players in England at any one time? To what extent is participation in this sport a crucial part of the identity of the players? What do they think they are doing when they play? How do other factors beyond gender diversify women's experience, including race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexuality, age and disability?

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[1] Richard Holt and Tony Mason *Sport in Britain 1945-2000* Oxford; London: Blackwell 2000 p.12.
[2] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' in John Williams and Stephen Wagg (eds.) *British Football and Social Change: Getting into Europe* Leicester: Leicester University Press 1991 p.100.
[3] Http://www.the-fa.org.womens 25June 2000.
[4] Http://www.the-fa.org.womens 30 July 2001.

In developing a conceptual framework for the research it was difficult not to be caught between a theoretical rock and experiential hard place. Richard Holt summarises the unease between the 'theorists of sport and the ordinary historian' as follows:

> Sociologists frequently complain that historians lack a conceptual framework for their research, whilst historians tend to feel social theorists require them to compress the diversity of the past into artificially rigid categories and dispense with empirical verification of their theories.[5]

The challenge was to explore diversity within a structure that enables us to begin to understand women's football. I consequently felt freer to begin with the views of the players as this was a fundamental part of my lived experience of the sport. This narrative interpretation of events, people, texts and context spotlights the relationship between the detail of players' experience and the surrounding range of factors which bear upon the creation and understanding of that subjectivity. There is an immediacy and a transience which often informs administrators' and players' actions that is important to try to capture. That is, women's football is idiosyncratically un-monumental. Solutions are often designed to work upon the moment and to accomplish action at the time rather than to stand for something in the future.

So little work has been covered in the specific subject area it is difficult to draw upon selected themes from writing about football, about women's experience of team sport particularly or women's sport generally. In attempting to find evidence of a recent, rapid increase a very different view emerged. Women's relationship to football has been part of the social and cultural history of England for over a century. Women and girls who wish to play still appear sufficiently unnatural to warrant a good deal of comment in the media, even if academics dismiss women's participation as worthy of oversight.[6] When the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 in England was drafted to exempt professional football specifically and competitive sport generally from gains in equality by women, then it seems safe to say that women's association with football is about more than sport.

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[5] Richard Holt *Sport and the British: A Modern History* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989 p. 357.
[6] Tony Mason *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915* Brighton: Harvester 1980 has eighteen references to women but mainly in the context of wives. He is cautious, for example, in describing shareholders of Woolwich Arsenal in 1893, 'There were also 54 married women...this is an intriguing piece of information although what it signifies I do not know' p.56 n.91; James Walvin *The People's Game: The History of Football Revisited* London, Glasgow: Mainstream 1994 covers the period of this study in addition to pre-industrial football but, even with the revised content, has no indexed reference to women and mentions them most frequently in domestic settings p.165-166.

> It seems to me that football is a game that is excepted from this staute. It is a game in which on all the evidence here the average woman is at a disadvantage to the average man because she has not got the stamina or physique to stand up to men in regard to it...women have many other qualities superior to those of men, but they have not got the strength or stamina to run, to kick or tackle, and so forth.[7]

This legislation is now almost thirty years old yet Section 44, the clause that limits female access to competitive sport, has endured in its original form in spite of other amendments. Since the purpose of the Act was to address archaic conceptions of the roles of men and women, to insist on the preservation of essential gender difference in sport is both logically and legally questionable. This is one indication of many that the connection between football and women looks set to remain contentious for the foreseeable future.

The stereotype that putting on a football strip indicates that a woman is a tomboy, a lesbian or looking to swap shirts with male onlookers raised particular questions. Precisely because of the tendency to homogenise women in football it seemed necessary to resist describing players as a set of persons with some common form of status, however one dimension repeatedly came to the fore. Sport generally and football particularly may be relatively innocuous compared to other economic, social and cultural inequalities that women face but they have a particular way of expressing the sex/gender distinction. In football as a professional sport, an industry, an educational specialism and so forth, women's opportunities at the highest level are limited. In supposedly meritocratic systems, similarities between the sexes, fundamental individualism and equality of opportunity, the cornerstones of liberal feminism in its simplest form, appear to have a limited relevance. How appropriate then is it to pursue a liberal agenda in developing women's football? In order to push to more radical conclusions ideas of gender as they are enshrined in football have been critically evaluated, for example, the tired concept of the average man and woman.

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[7] Lord Denning *Theresa Bennet v. The Football Association Limited and the Nottinghamshire Football Association* Unreported: Judgement of 28 July 1978 p.4-5

2. A game for rough girls?[8]

While other elements are vital to the consideration of women's experience, gender as a fundamental part of the experience of sporting has a growing literature.[9] Women who regularly coach or play football against men made the following comments:

> And sometimes they look at you like, you know, who's she? Then you just have to get your head down and get on with it and after a while they forget and you've got their respect, especially if you pull off skill moves. So you have to have confidence of (sic) your ability...play your own game.[10]

> One of them said, 'Are you his assistant?' even though I was in boots and kit and so I thought, 'Right! I'll have you'...and I did. I waited until he came to tackle me first time, feinted to the right to go inside and went left and stuck a perfect nutmeg on him (sic). I was laughing so much I couldn't run with the ball... (laughs) had to pass'.[11]

Gender clearly influences an individual's experience of Association Football, supposedly the national game of England. The myth of sport as a male pursuit emerged in two main ways from the interviews with players. The first was the change in the material context of women's football as a participation activity rather than spectacle after the 1960s. A starting point is English women's lack of interest in competing in football. Even generous figures suggest female participation is, at best, one fiftieth of male participation.

> There is a total of 2.25 million footballers in England, which includes 750,000 players of school age (say 16 and under) and 41,000 female players. Altogether there are 42, 000 football clubs.[12]

However, for this study these figures implied that were thousands of potential participants to whom the researcher could speak and far too many to contact in person! The second aspect is

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[8] Oscar Wilde's possibly apocryphal observation, 'Football is all very well a good game for rough girls, but is quite unsuitable for delicate boys' has become sufficiently part of football popular culture to be printed on t shirts by Philosophy Football Shirts of London.

[9] M. Ann Hall *Feminism and Sporting Bodies: Essays on Theory and Practice* Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics 1996; Jennifer Hargreaves *Sport, Power and Culture* Cambridge: Polity Press 1986; Pat Griffin *Strong Women, Deep Closets* Champaign: Illinois Human Kinetics 1998.

[10] MMQ, Army and Combined Forces Captain, Loughborough 25 June 2001.

[11] JMG, coach candidate and player, Pangbourne 17 May 2000.

[12] The Football Association http:www.the-fa.org/reference 3 October 2001note the difference between this figure and the figure of 35,000 given at http:www.the-fa.org.womens.

reflected in a conservative form of feminine behaviour, as indicated by one response to the question 'Why has football for women become so popular?'

> I believe women are becoming physically stronger in recent years by comparison to ten years ago (sic).[13]

In this player's view, the change in women enables them to play a male sport, rather a shift in sporting practice or female expectations. This led to further questions such as, is there a consensus among players about cultural, economic and social arrangements for women's football? Evidently, the variety of practices in women's football is a more complex historical reality than one that places football authorities in prime position. This said, how best to collect and collate data?

There are two main purposes in using oral history sources in this study. The first is to apply to women's football what Passerini has called 'subjectivity' in her study of memory. By this she means:

> Both the aspects of spontaneous subjective being... contained and represented by attitude, behaviour and language, as well as other forms of awareness... such as the sense of identity, consciousness of oneself, and more considered forms of intellectual activity.[14]

In relating this to women's football, both the content and the manner of what was said became valuable. Female players contested ideas about physical inferiority, comparative lack of strength and power. In answer to the question 'Do you feel that biological differences affect the way that men and women play football?' the women's responses included:

> Yes – men are more stronger (sic), physical, faster than women, not just in football but in anything. I think we have a lot of skill because our game is of a slower pace it allows you to take time on the ball.[15]

> Men have greater muscle fibres to develop which enables them to have more strength.[16]

> Not in ability, but obviously pregnancies are the only biological difference that would stop a female player.[17]

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[13] PP, England trialist, Darsbury 4 March 1999.
[14] Luisa Passerini (ed.) *Memory and Totalitarianism: International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories* Vol.1 Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992 p.8.
[15] Elite questionnaire 7.
[16] Non-elite questionnaire 9.

> Men more physical at the higher levels and more physically agile. It is also a lot quicker men's football.[18]

The material coercion of the ban on playing on FA pitches which lasted from 1921 to 1971 no longer exists but there was a degree of unanimity about internalised and rationalised acceptance of gender as a principle to support single-sex sport.[19]

Women players appeared to draw reassurance from, and yet be stigmatised by, their participation in the game. Responses to the question, 'Is there a time you stopped playing football?' reflect this dual experience.

> Never stopped because I love playing. Some people sometimes take the mickey out of me but I'm not bothered.[20]

> People still view football as a man's game and this won't change overnight. I believe that in order to encourage new girls into the teams we need to show them that girls who play football are still feminine. This could be done by using the media to focus on professional teams and focus on two main things: (a) the game, (b) the girls.[21]

What motivated women players to continue? Most valued 'fun' as the primary reason for participating. Football is a team sport, requiring levels of particular skill. Players who choose to wear a uniform with several others and take their exercise collectively, outside, in a contact sport that is also an invasion game, place themselves in a public arena. This contrasts with individual sports and other forms of exercise popularly undertaken by women (for example, swimming, tennis, and aerobics) and with school-based team sports (like field hockey and netball) which are usually played at private clubs or on school grounds. As Richard Holt has written in connection with a shift to sport participation in Victorian culture,

> The gratuitous expenditure of energy in organized groups according to carefully drafted laws is a very special way of having fun.[22]

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[17] Elite questionnaire 17.
[18] Non-elite questionnaire 24.
[19] This is further supported by Kari Fasting et al. 'Women Playing Soccer – Experiences From Europe' *ICSSPE Bulletin* No. 25 Berlin 1998 pp. 38-39; Jayne Caudwell 'Women's Football in the United Kingdom: Theorising Gender and unpacking the Butch Lesbian Image' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* Vol. 23 No.4 November 1999 pp.390-403.
[20] Non-elite questionnaire 37.
[21] Elite questionnaire 6.
[22] Richard Holt *Sport and the British* p. 87.

Women's football is often played on parks or land with a public right of way. This public form of exercise is one enduring dimension of women's football culture, whether or not it is highly visible as a sport.

Part of the amusement was a sense of being in a group. This is not unique to women's football as Tony Mason has described:

> Sport often contributes to an enhancement of the individual's sense of identity with or belonging to a group or collectivity. It can be district, village, town, city or county. It can be class, colour or country.[23]

In attempting to find evidence to support this point in women's football, gender was evidently one of many aspects of players' identity; its fluctuating importance relative to other experiences. Association with others representing a place was partially useful as an explanation. However, it did not fully explain the combination of membership and independence that the players talked about. Respondents also described their identity in the team as being formed by nicknames, their particular quality as a player and the role they contributed in terms of group cohesion. Notably not one of the players claimed to be excellent by their own judgement; self praise was often prefaced by comments such as 'X often says I've got excellent balance', X frequently denoting the coach, or 'The team always relies on my sliding tackles'. Performance was very rarely described in absolute terms.

The second purpose in using oral history is to ask how important gender is to the underdevelopment of women's football. On the one hand it has passed into football lore that Cissie (sometimes given as Sissie) Charlton, sister of Jackie Milburn and mother of World Cup hero Bobby, taught her young son to play in the back yard.[24] On the other, some commentators are so offended by football for women that they equate it to a modern day equivalent of a dog on hind legs.[25] In lacking both a sense of history and a link between local and national memory, the failure of women's football may be less about women playing than an inability to grasp the

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[23] Tony Mason *Sport in Britain* London: Faber and Faber 1988 p.118.

[24] Cissie Charlton and Vince Gladhill *Cissie: Football's Most Famous Mother* Morpeth: Bridge Studio 1988 p. 102 is only one text where women's relationship with professional footballers is described. See, for example, very different treatments of the 'football wife' in the biography of Beattie Fry by Ronald Morris *The Captain's Lady* London: Chatto and Windus 1985 and Penny Watson *My Dear Watson: The Story of a Football Marriage* London: Arthur Barker 1981; the personal assistant's point of view in Jane Nottage *Paul Gascoigne: The Inside Story* London: Collins Willow 1993 and the daughter's perspective of a family including four professional brothers in Phil Jackson *Liverpool's Sporting Pages* Bromborough: Lechlade 1991.

popular imagination to consolidate and project a sense of community. Taken together, these two intentions combine to place the views of the interviewees as mediated texts, very much of a period in the development of the sport.

So it is not just as players that some women feel disadvantaged. As a whole women were reticent to speak as experts on football in contrast to male managers, coaches and players who had lots of opinions. Some players emphasised social support rather than athletic achievement as their main motivation.

> A great mix of over 30's and under 18's. Experience counts. We battle together, never give up.[26]
>
> High spirited, determined, fun loving, fair, following the motto: 'All for one and one for all!'[27]
>
> A friendly team, with a good atmosphere and we have the greatest parents to go with it.[28]

The process of assimilation of younger players by older players into the club hierarchy is noteworthy. It was not unusual to find a mother and daughter or siblings playing for the same club, though one team in which three sets of mothers and daughters and a mother of five played was exceptional.

The most difficult nut to crack, from the sources available, was to arrive at a judgement of the extent to which women are agents in the rise of women's football beyond the organisation of their own club. Individual and collective memories are therefore central to the study. The value of these memories to women players and administrators raised questions of a sense of a common past. What is the relationship of the individual woman to the 'football family' (to women footballers, women athletes, to male footballers, a particular team)? As one player said:

> The image of women's football on TV is that most women in football are gay, which is untrue, and that we are in it to escape our families which is also untrue.[29]

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[25] Brian Glanville referring to Dr Johnson's comments about women preaching 'A Woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well but you are surprised to find it done at all' in Boswell *Life* vol. 1 cited in Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* London: Scarlet 1997 p. 210.
[26] Non-elite questionnaire 23 March 1999 in answer to the question 'How would you describe your team?'
[27] Non-elite questionnaire 4 October 1999 in answer to the question 'How would you describe your team?'
[28] PR, player age 14, Notts County Centre of Excellence 10 February 2000 in answer to the question 'How would you describe your team?'

The contentious relationship to the sport means that, for the foreseeable future, the female body as 'contested ideological terrain' in football will remain.

None of the women interviewed identified themselves as feminist, but they shared in the dilemma of how to change women's place in sport. M Ann Hall has asked 'a straightforward question: Why do some women make sport and physical activity an important part of their lives and others do not?'[30] Evidently this could be applied both to other groups and made more complex by considering the multiplicity of individual identity. However, Hall draws a provocative conclusion that has informed this project fundamentally, 'As feminists, our theory, politics, and practices are inextricably linked. Those working in academe, whose focus is research and scholarship, must work with those on the front line ... so that together we are doing critical political work.'[31]

In applying Hall's work to football, the emphasis on participant observation is intended simultaneously to engage with the variety of identities that players experience and, at the same time, to help develop the sport. It would seem wrong to accept the magnanimous support of the players and leave it at that. Hall's phrase 'critical political work' links this study with the players who have co-produced the themes by their comments and actions. Moreover, because the undertaking has been feminist from the outset, the variety of women players' responses compares with my own view. The thesis does not speak on behalf of women footballers but it aims to speak to them.

If there are approximately 35,000 female players, the sample for this study could only be relatively small if the evidence sought was of a qualitative kind, likely to emphasise opinion and the place of football in the lives of players. Trevor Lummis has said of the reliability of individual interviews:

> The validation of oral evidence can be divided into two main areas: the degree to which any individual interview yields reliable information on the historical experience, and the degree to which that individual experience is typical of its time and place'.[32]

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[29] JS, player, coach and England trialist, Loughborough 19 October 2000.
[30] M. Ann Hall *Feminism and Sporting Bodies* p.3.
[31] M Ann Hall *Feminism and Sporting Bodies* p.5.
[32] Trevor Lummis 'Structure and Validity in Oral Evidence' *International Journal of Oral History* Vol.2 Issue 2 1983 p.119.

So, initially during interviews, participants were asked to speak as a free narration. Since so few felt confident with this form, more specific questions were asked. Though most of the contributors initially met me in my capacity as a player, at elite level their comments were often guarded. For example in response to the question, 'Do you feel that biological differences affect the way that men and women play football?' elite players replied four to one in favour of male strength and superiority.

> Yes. Women don't have to rely on strength so the game tends to be more about skill and team play.[33]
>
> Yes, as men's bodies are better adapted for the physical exercise, but it just means we play a different class of football than them.[34]
>
> Yes, we are not as strong or fast.[35]

On the one hand this may protect the sphere of women's football for women but it could also connote what Luisa Passerini suggests is an issue of validity in collecting oral testimony, 'Self censorship is evidence of a scar'.[36] This reserve became in itself 'typical' of the diplomacy required of representative players. This is revealing of the historical experience of women players. At high level an inability or unwillingness to operate discretely has serious implications for a player's representative career regardless of her football ability. Tact and moderation are practically a pre-requisite for a woman England player.

Interviews with competitive and recreational players raised other points including the place of lesbian and heterosexual participants in the sport and this sensitive subject was treated in contrasting ways. Ali Melling has suggested that the 1950s and 1960s was a turning point in the rise of gay women taking part in football.

> After the release of the Kinsey Report in the 1950s the situation was complicated by a growth of public awareness regarding homosexuality. Women were sometimes jeered at during matches, with the result that many women players became victims of homophobia from both inside and outside the game. From the 1960s onwards, gay women have indeed become increasingly involved in women's football. A number of writers have argued that lesbians are attracted to football because the characteristics required to play are contrary to the dominant

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[33] JT, England Trialist, Darsbury 27 March 1998.
[34] SR, Doncaster Belles player, Doncaster 11 August 1998.
[35] JM, Doncaster Belles youth player, Doncaster 11August 1998.
[36] Luisa Passerini *Memory and Totalitarianism* p.8.

> ideal of femininity. Whatever the motivation, it has not been uncommon for confrontations to arise between the heterosexual majority and the gay minority.[37]

The first part of the statement appears to support the findings of this research in that both when playing and in association with football, women and girls are still likely to receive homophobic comments. However, the final three sentences seem like generalisations that would be pretty hard to substantiate and appear to border on an acceptance of football's masculine qualities. In comparison, a young England player denied that there was any homosexual behaviour around the sport.

> I have never seen any lesbian behaviour and I don't know any lesbian players. I think that's a stereotype.[38]

The topic was also frequently and obliquely raised by young interviewees, often quite early in the interview. For example, a repeated comment was that the combination of training and school left little time for boyfriends.

> Well, you know, some boys don't understand that you have to train twice a week and I want to do well at school so I work most nights on homework.[39]

> *She* has a boyfriend (pointing) that's why she doesn't always come Tuesdays... (laughs) she tells her mum she's at training though. She expects me to cover.[40]

Assertion of heterosexuality could be seen as conservatism, or the protection of a sexual self-image when participating in what has been seen as a male sport. It could also be a protection of the club and team from contention, or any combination of these. An openly homophobic point of view came from a male teacher and coach on a Child Protection course who initiated the conversation that girls' football was:

> A: Full of lesbians using The Centres of Excellence to get close to girls to turn them.
> Q: Turn them?
> A: *You know*... into lesbians. They're very impressionable at that age. Fourteen is a funny age for girls and some of them look like boys, so boys don't find them attractive and then someone gives them attention...[41]

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[37] Ali Melling 'Women and Football' in Cox, Russell and Vamplew (eds) *Encyclopedia of British Football* London; Oregon: Frank Cass 2002 p. 328
[38] SS, England player, Liverpool 8 July 1999.
[39] JC, player age 12, Notts County Centre of Excellence 20 February 2000.
[40] GB, player age 14, Notts County Centre of Excellence 18 March 2000.

It would appear that the insistence on heterosexuality was based on ideas of the respectability of the game as linked to the femininity of players. The disagreement was, in itself, evidence of the complications arising as players negotiate stereotypes.

On the one hand I wanted to view the information as reliable to the extent that it revealed ways about which women's football is discussed, whether or not the specific allegations were 'true'. On the other, the stereotype of the predatory lesbian figured large in my own experience as a teacher. Furthermore, the Child Protection literature suggested disbelief to be the key feature of abuse of vulnerable groups and individuals. Sports leadership is becoming slightly more self-regulating but remains a long way from the formal structures of other educational and professional practices. Most of note for this study is the correlation of increased female participation and Child Protection procedures, with the FA initiating training in 2000.[42] The spectre of sexual harassment overshadows the basic form of abuse that many boys have been subject to for years by the nature of their engagement with the sport: parents who scream supposedly supportive and instructional comments from the sidelines.[43]

Those who coach women players made another point requiring theoretical illustration. Both male and female coaches reported a need to speak differently to women.

> Women are like sponges. They're great to coach... they've got no egos to massage like blokes.[44]

Specifically, coaches reported the need to motivate by encouragement rather than criticism ('women take things personally') and to comment specifically on the performance of skill rather than on attitude or approach. The most feared form of verbal abuse was laughter and several senior coaches discussed the difficulty of getting players to express themselves sufficiently so that they might try manoeuvres which required mental and physical courage like overhead kicks or diving headers. Even obviously skilled players felt risk of being laughed at if the move failed.

> Well, even though you're all 'girls together' sort of thing the pressure's on ...so it's alright to say, express yourself, enjoy yourself and those other clichés they

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[41] PH, Secondary PE teacher, A Licence Coach and Child Protection Tutor Training Seminar participant, Leicester 7 November 2000.
[42] JW Participation at the inaugural FA Child Protection Tutor Training Seminar Leicester 18 August 2000.
[43] Pontuus Kaamark Leicester 9 October 1998 the Swedish International and Leicester City player suggested that he 'would have been in tears' if he had played as a child in England.
[44] Major Butch Maycock, coach of army side, phone interview Leicester 28 June 2001.

> trot out but if you go for a big one and fail, you look a right plonker. Keep it simple... do the simple things well.[45]

However, during mixed coaching courses it became clear that confidence for players in general is an issue, not just for women. A male player surprised me by saying of another,

> He's got the confidence. I'm just beginning to get that level of confidence but my knees are going.[46]

This sort of detail confirmed my approach in understanding the game of football itself. The social and cultural factors around football for women were not the only means of understanding the sport-specific issues.

The final challenging aspect to arise out of the use of interview and participant observation was that the most interesting comments often arose from the contradictory positions women find themselves in when their values and experience clash. These included perceptions of what is viable work for women. Three young England internationals, for example, offered scholarships to America had decided not to accept because they could not envisage a career in football and suggested related careers instead as teachers, physiotherapists or leisure workers.[47] Such pragmatic choices suggest the limited nature of a tradition for women players as professionals. In the first phase of interest, women's football was perceived as of sufficient threat to male professional football by 1921 that it was 'banned' by the FA. Eighty years later some young elite women players could not perceive a professional career in the sport, even in closely related occupations.

The full account of the inter-war or post-war development of women's football in English society remains to be written and lies beyond what is attempted here. The starting point of the discussion that follows is that the common-sense ideas regarding a lack of a connection between women and football as players have been supported by academics until very recently. Not only have the systematic attempts to prevent women from playing received scant treatment, the women who have played and the forms that participation have taken requires considerable further research.

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[45] JM, player England squad, 8 March Darsbury 1998.
[46] FG, coach candidate on B Licence course, Pangbourne 17 May 2000.

3. Women and the Historiography of Association Football in England

The reactionary sporting world clearly needs to include some women as members for its cultural legitimacy. Football is traditionalist but ambitious and claims for a recent rise of female interest retain the idea of natural gender difference and at the same time allow women to participate as consumers. Mariah Burton Nelson provides a critique of the process whereby a sport is equated with masculinity as feminism gains footholds in popular culture in her study of the code of American football, *The Stronger Women Get, The More Men Love Football*.[48] Football is perceived differently in and between cultures and her argument usefully traces the way that some sports become associated with manliness.[49] Relating her work to the association code in the 1990s, football authorities have become more public relations oriented, if not less conservative, as they market their sport to women in a feminine appropriate form or risk losing an important segment of the leisure and entertainment audience.

Beyond sport, in relation to cultural practice, the conditions under which women have represented female experience are dependent upon historical context. Writing was not, for Virginia Woolf, 'Spun in mid air by incorporeal creatures' but linked to material conditions.[50] This is one reason why some cultural forms, such as music and visual art, that require greater financial resources for their production, distribution, social consumption and reception are particularly closed to women. This is a diverse and rapidly changing topic to describe. Cinema, like football has seen a dramatic resurgence since the 1970s in audience popularity and a considerable increase in production costs and values. Academic film studies includes both the production and technology of the film industry but also cultural studies analysis of audience composition and consumption values, for example the use of the Internet to express fan worship of Judy Garland and political correctness in Martial Arts cinema.[51] Attempts to describe how various groups are marginalised in Hollywood films include the use of feminist and queer theory, critiques of nationalism, postcolonial and spectator theory. Such is the expansion of this historiography that representation

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[47] DM, JM, SR, players England Squad, Darsbury 8 March 1998.
[48] Mariah Burton Nelson *The Stronger Women Get, The More Men love Football: Sexism and the Culture of Sport* London: Women's Press 1996.
[49] There is a developing literature about the relationship between American Football and soccer, including the texts referenced above and Alan Tomlinson and John Sugden (eds.) *Hosts and Champions: Soccer Cultures, National Identities and the USA World Cup* Aldershot: Arena 1994.
[50] Virginia Woolf *A Room of One's Own* London: Harmondsworth 1970 (first published in 1929) p.10
[51] Matthew Tinkcom and Amy Villajero *Keyframes: Popular Cinema and Cultural Studies* London: Routledge 2001

of gender is one of the sub genres of the literature.[52] In contrast, only a fraction has been written about gender in football as a cultural practice so it is worth developing the point that football requires access to pitches, kit, personnel and communications at competitive level and more considerable resources at elite level.

Jennifer Hargreaves' work has been a recent notable exception to the underdeveloped application of ethnographic methods to research gender in sport. In her latest work, the term heroine is used to describe traditionally marginalised groups of women.[53] Each chapter is devoted to a group including Muslim, lesbian, physically impaired and aboriginal women. The voice of women as agents in constructing their own identity is clear. The conflicting and correlating opinions reflect Hargreaves' opinion that, 'Identity embodies sameness *and* difference'.[54] This resembled the pattern emerging from my interviews and questionnaires. It would be difficult to conduct research of this kind without feeling considerable admiration for women players and organisers who are also coaches, lead junior teams, raise funds and so forth. Less convincing is Hargreaves' view that participation is awe inspiring in itself. The patience and determination to succeed shown by some women in her study may be extraordinary. To extend this to argue for a change in sport culture to prioritise engagement rather than outcome is idealistic at the present moment as Brian Pronger has pointed out with relation to homophobia in sport:

> A sport competition is illegitimate without the clear differentiation of the dominant and submissive. This is why important championship games cannot end in a tie.[55]

In football some girls and women engage in a more detailed and systematic fashion than others; not all are equally altruistic in their contribution.

M Ann Hall has made a notable addition to the work of Hargreaves and feminist analyses of sport by critiquing feminist theory and her own, originally positivist, work.[56] In particular she has borrowed the term 'leaky hegemony' and extended it to characterise the history of women in

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[52] New titles include Chris Holmlund *Impossible Bodies: Femininity and Masculinity at the Movies* London: Routledge 2001 and Diane Negra *Off-White Hollywood:American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* London: Routledge 2001.
[53] Jennifer Hargreaves *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* London: Routledge 2000 p.2.
[54] Jennifer Hargreaves *Heroines of Sport* p.7..
[55] Brian Pronger 'Outta My Endzone: Sport and the territorial anus' in *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* Volume 3 Issue 4 November 1999 p.385.
[56] M Ann Hall *Feminism and Sporting Bodies* p. 3.

sport as cultural resistance.[57] For example, her discussion of cycling as both increasing the mobility of women and in changing dress codes.[58] How and when groups of women football players travel is an example of access to leisure resources impacting on access to culture. In this study, players' access to a car and the ability to compete are directly linked because of the geographical spread of teams. It is difficult, on the one hand, to imagine whole teams travelling by public transport. On the other, the sports tourism and levels of hospitality involved in playing away is part of players' experience of different locations.

Finally it is crucial to place the rise of second wave feminist writing alongside the rise of sport generally, football particularly, as a popular activity since the 1960s. Football has remained impervious to academic feminist appeals for change and for women it is still in the 'me too' stage.[59] Does the responsibility for this lie in football or feminism? Jennifer Hargreaves has suggested three models for change in female sport; co-option into a male sphere of activity, a separatist all female strategy and co-operative venture with men for qualitative new models in which differences in the sexes are unimportant.[60] The problem with this interpretation is that the initiative lies with men in giving up power. This is clearly a slow process. Football and English sport has hardly been at the vanguard of the change that has occurred and football for women under the control of both the WFA and the FA is symptomatic of the wider conservatism of officialdom. The formal parameters that can be applied to women playing competitive football are, by no means, rational or inevitable.[61] In addition, since the 1960s, women's attempts to enter football have corresponded with a new and emergent professionalism in the sport. The use of associations for various specialisms particularly and the process of patronage generally have served to include a few exceptional individuals at the expense of a critical mass of women.

Certain of the individuals interviewed for this study, although independent in terms of not being employed by the FA, are used by it as spokespersons at conferences and in the media. Others have been chosen because they are 'experts' in their chosen field but highly critical of FA policy. These individuals were most active as players in the 1970s and early 1980s and therefore have a

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[57] Susan Birrell and Nancy Theberg 'Feminist Resistance and Transformation in Sport' in D Costa and S Guthrie (eds.) *Women and Sport: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics 1994 p. 263.
[58] M Ann Hall *Feminism and Sporting Bodies* p.101.
[59] Sheila Fletcher *Women First* p. 5 the phrase is originally attributed to Eleanor Rathbone in 1938.
[60] Jennifer Hargreaves *Sporting Females* p.295.
[61] FIFA *Preamble to the laws of the Game* Zurich 1999 states 'Laws may be modified for matches for players of under 16 years of age, for women footballers and for veteran footballers over 35 years of age. Any or all of the following modifications are permissible: size of the field of play; size, weight and material of the ball; width of goalposts and height of crossbar from the ground; the duration of the periods of play; substitutions.'

particular view of the WFA and FA administration. The FA has refused access to some of its records because of its own funded research project into women's football. There remains dispute about whether the majority of WFA material has also been taken into the archive. However WFA administrators and volunteers often kept minutes of meetings and so some documented debates are traceable

Internationally and nationally governing bodies such as FIFA and the English FA have begun to introduce a system of including women's football into existing administrative arrangements. This policy differentiates women as a group in order to access funding, sports development and technical expertise and is some way from full integration into all of the functions of the associations. It is not overstating the case to say that the historiography of women's football has been largely uncritical of the football authorities. Though some work has been done to reconstruct the history of women's football between the wars, in the majority of cases this history is not known to the players interviewed for this study at even a basic level. [62] Very few players had heard of the large factory teams of the 1920s nor of local teams based in large companies.

> Football was the first 'supposed man's game' that women have took further (sic). Although I would like to see it made professional. Other sports like golf, cricket, rugby are now becoming more popular and women are showing an interest, so it should grow.[63]

Very few non-elite participants could name a current favourite female player who was not in their team.[64] A majority of league administrators who were also players were unaware of past FA policy and cited the demands of keeping up with current practice as a reason for this lack of knowledge.

Sheila Fletcher has suggested that women's football may have a more varied history than first thought before the rapid increase in interest during World War One. Though Miss Lawrence of Roedean and Miss Dove thought football to be too rough for girls, there is evidence of a variety of school or college competitions at the turn of the century:

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[62] Alethea Melling *Ladies' Football: Gender and the Socialisation of Women Football Players in Lancashire 1916-1960* unpublished PhD thesis University of Central Lancashire November 1999.; David Williamson *The Belles of the Ball* Devon: R and D Associates 1991.

[63] JG, England trialist, Warwick 17 March 1999.

[64] The responses included England representatives Karen Walker, Claire Utley, Kelly Smith and US National Team player, Mia Hamm the remainder were from local teams.

> The Girls Public Day School Trust *Centenary Review* records that in 1884 there was football club at the Brighton High School and that football was played in the early days of Nottingham High School. MC Bradbook's *That Infidel Place* records that the earliest students at Girton tried to play football but Miss Davies forbade it. There is a reference to schoolgirl football in Angela Brazil's *The Fortunes of Phillippa* (1906). In 1922, according to the *Evening Standard* report, the girls in Messrs Lyons' Athletics club were 'specially fond of football'.[65]

Middle class girls may have been more likely to have their behaviour overlooked. However, for working class girls and boys, finding space to play was a constraining factor as was poverty and ill health. We know little of whether girls played football in single sex groupings or with boys at this time. Like hockey and cricket, football was perceived by some woman educators to lead to possible injury and the medical theories of the day, as Fletcher points out, often held that bruises to the chest or torso could become cancerous.[66]

Fletcher covers team games fairly extensively throughout as creating a groundswell of interest on which Swedish gymnastics rode to prominence. Though a variety of games including netball, lacrosse, hockey and cricket are discussed, football is hardly commented upon apart from the footnote referred to above. Could there be more of a tradition of football if students played a game and were coached by a mistress who also played? Head teachers promoting women's sport at the turn of the twentieth century accepted diverse sports. Conflicting medical advice led, for example, hockey to be considered by some, but by no means all, as more feminine that football.[67]

Outside sports history, Bourdieu's work can be used to show how the lack of patronage from 'on high' was a contributory factor in the limited development of the game at this time. His analysis of the role of the school shows how important sponsorship was.

> This ambiguity can only be understood if one bears in mind the history of the process which, as in the 'elite schools' of nineteenth-century England, leads to the transmutation of popular games into elite sports, associated with an aristocratic ethic and world view...entailing a radical change in meaning and function...which, in a second phase, transforms elite sport into mass sport, a spectacle as much as a practice.[68]

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[65] Sheila Fletcher *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education 1880-1980* London: Athlone 1984 p.162.
[66] Sheila Fletcher *Women First* p.26.
[67] Sheila Fletcher *Women First* p.34 for an example of the rapid and wholesale change of attitude by Miss Beale at Cheltenham regarding hockey and the persistence of medical opinion that sports were harmful.
[68] Pierre Bourdieu *Distinction A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* London: Routledge 1986 p.20.

It could well be argued that the failure to establish women's football as an elite sport prevented its further development into a mass sport. Though it had a phase of spectator-based support during the First World War this lack of association with an upper-class ethos remains today in contrast, for instance, with university-based women's rugby. Public school and university football for women has lagged behind, for example enthusiasts' and works' teams, and women's football has yet to be championed by social elites.

The historiography of football and its players is a good indicator of the changing status of both. Women's football did not end with the FA ban in 1921 and research has identified at least 40 teams playing regular matches, including internationals in the years 1921 – 1960.[69] However many ex-players in this study felt that it was a lost sport, not in terms of being played, but lost to history:

> I kept a scrapbook because although we were well known locally, after the FA ban even professional players like Tom Finney would get letters from the FA threatening them not to help us or be photographed with us. But I went to school with Tom.[70]

As Richard Holt has said of sports history more generally:

> The ordinary participant has been overlooked in the history of sport, which often has been little more than the Book of Chronicles or the Book of Numbers. Praising a few famous men and compiling records is not enough.[71]

Perhaps more surprising is the scarcity of literature on boys' and men's experience of the sport as players. Feminism has influenced the gendered study of sport participation to the extent that theorists like Bruce Kidd regard sport as, 'A form of male practice through which different masculinities compete'.[72] The naturalisation of the male body in football is based on the difference between the average values in height and weight between men and women. In male football, terms commonly used to justify male pre-eminence such as 'heaviness' and height are artificial and of dubious relevance. For example Hutchins, in his thesis examining the North East

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[69] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* p. 75 has 150 teams in 1921.
[70] JW, player in 1940s, Grimsby 10 October 1997.
[71] Richard Holt *Sport and the British* p. 2.
[72] Bruce Kidd 'The Men's Cultural Centre: Sports and the Dynamic of Women's Oppression/ Men's Repression' in Michael Messner and Donald Sabo (eds.) *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives* Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics 1990 p. 33.

as a major contribution to football talent, explores physical size as an indicator of male football ability:

> An investigation in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1933, showed that at least a third of school children from the poorer districts of the city were unhealthy and physically unfit. The infant mortality rate was 51 per thousand live births for London in 1935, but 114 for Jarrow. In 1930 Newcastle schoolboys won the Schools Shield for the first time when they beat Chesterfield in the final. In the semi-final Newcastle defeated Reading, and once again a southern schoolboys team was described as 'heavier' than their opponents from the North East.[73]

The smaller Newcastle team won, so size as such is not related to football ability. A more detailed study of male players' negotiation of gender is clearly overdue but is beyond the scope of this investigation.

There has been, and disturbingly still is, sports science research that emphasises the difference between men and women to no particular purpose.[74] An example is Tom Reilly's article which attempts to capture 'the interactions between football performance measurements and menstrual cycle phase.' From one report of increased *susceptibility* to injury Reilly extrapolates to all women players contradictory findings.

> Women are more vulnerable to errors during pre-menses though exercise performance is not necessarily impaired during any stage. Indeed Olympic gold medals have been won at all stages of the menstrual cycle.[75]

It is difficult to see the value of such indeterminate findings except as a reflection of how far positivistic research has followed other sports academia in ignoring women as players. This is a function of the insistence in defining men and women as distinct populations. In the various official and unofficial histories of English football women have fared little better. For much of this century women's lack of access to football was seen to be insignificant, and this continues. Walvin cites the 1960s as a time of changing directions for women who, he suggests, chose not to take up team sports or enter the public house:

> The sexually segregated world of masculine pleasure...was less attractive to women. And more and more of those women were able, unlike their female

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[73] PG Hutchins *Football and the North East* unpublished PhD thesis Sussex 1990 p.232.
[74] Tom Reilly 'Physiology and the Female Footballer' *Insight: The FA Coaches Association Journal* Issue 3 volume 4 Summer 2001 pp. 26-29.
[75] Tom Reilly 'Physiology and the Female Footballer' p. 27.

> forbears, to have their say in the way their menfolk spent their free time – and money.[76]

The mechanisms whereby women were kept out of team games and pubs are ignored, as are those women who did enter these domains. In a wide variety of official and other histories the argument follows the line that the 1921 ban and subsequent lack of sporting and employment opportunity for women appeared to be of little importance.[77] However the situation was not that simple. The increased interest in the 1960s occurred against a backdrop of flagging fixtures amongst those teams that still existed from the earlier heyday; Dick, Kerr Ladies, for example, ceased to play in 1965.[78] The link with popular feminist movements involving collective action and with modernity proposes women's interest as recent and progressive. Unravelling the myth of women's lack of interest from the actual participation of women is the central theme of the following section.

In 2001, over a hundred and thirty years after association football as a code defined itself, there are few female managers, coaches and players at professional level. This appears to suggest that women are, as yet, behind in their football knowledge. The historiography here leaves a gap that is difficult to fill. How has it affected those girls and women who excelled at football not to be able to pursue it to the highest level because of their gender? 'It's just those ten years…' was the last sentence of my interview with the army and combined services captain from 1995 to 2000. My two lasting impressions of that occasion were her pride in leading the military equivalent of the national side and her sense of sadness and frustration that in the first decade of her service, football was not considered a female appropriate sport. She lost the opportunity to play in her prime as geographically disparate postings meant that civilian teams were not an option. This sense of loss has not been treated in the historiography of football. Nor has the broader issue been raised frequently enough.

One of the first examples of the integration of women's football in an academic text came not from history but from geography. John Bale's *Sport and Place*, written in 1982, differentiated the pattern of professional and amateur football in England Scotland and Wales and included a sub section on women's football. Bale has 51 clubs at the inception of the WFA and a number of

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[76] James Walvin *The People's Game: The History of Football Revisited* 1994 p. 166.
[77] Geoffrey Green *The History of the Football Association* London: Naldrett 1953 p. 600.
[78] Joan Whalley's scrapbook; Gail Newsham *In a League of Their Own* London: Scarlet 1998 p.139.

surprising findings, including high per capita indices for Devon and Cornwall.[79] His work has prompted questions about the extent to which the bureaucracy of women's football was sufficiently established before 1993 to reflect the patterns of women's involvement accurately. The fact that so few women's teams have a ground in their own right has shaped female participation to the extent that it has become an essentially itinerant activity without a base to play, collect and display memorabilia, except in players' homes.

Writing in 1989, Nicholas Fishwick attempted to include women in his study of *English Football and Society.*

> I thus seek to study the role of football in people's - not just men's – lives at its peak as a spectator sport against the background of the two world wars and their attendant upheavals, the General Strike, the Depression, the rapid expansions of the popular media and the Labour Party's rise to political power.[80]

Though he attempts to incorporate women and girls, his lapses into generalisation do little to further our understanding of the forces operating to prevent or enable women to play. This leads to arguments such as, 'It has always been assumed, even with prepubescent children, that girls were somehow less suited to football and school recreation for them took other forms'.[81] Women interviewed for this study proposed a different state of affairs. Nevertheless, interviewing a player who had been a child in the late fifties and early sixties to some extent confirms the school as the first institutional barrier preventing female play highlighted by Fishwick.

> There were separate playgrounds for boys and girls and football wasn't allowed in the girls' playground and they didn't seem to play the games that I was used to.[82]

Like Fletcher, Fishwick relies upon class as the decisive factor in preventing women from playing manly sports, as bourgeois and upper-class sport enabled the sexes to mix, whereas working-class sport was sexually segregated.[83] We do not know the extent to which street football involved girls though some early reports of folk football suggest men and women played. As Holt says, street

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[79] John Bale *Sport and Place: A Geography of Sport in England, Scotland and Wales* London: Hurst 1982 p. 52.
[80] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society 1910-1950* Manchester: Manchester University Press 1989 p.x.
[81] Nicholas Fishwick. *English Football and Society* p.4.
[82] GN, player, coach, administrator and author, Chorley Lancs 19 June 1999.
[83] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society* p.17.

football was an important bridge between folk and popular forms of the game.[84] In contrast Fishwick makes only three specific references to women before concluding that

> One should not ignore the fact that the national sport remained very sexually exclusive...it is difficult to be more precise about football's role as sexual segregator.[85]

However, a number of points he raises about junior football have proven to be valuable for this project. Firstly, local newspapers are described as vital to the growth of the junior game.[86] The parallel, discussed in the Chapter Four, is that the local press have been important not to the growth of women's football but in developing a sense of local public pride in women's teams. Crucially, there were no professional clubs for women that might pluck an often-named local youngster out of the ranks, as with junior football, but the press could report achievements, and in this way encourage local talent.[87] Secondly, Fishwick details the patrons of young men's and boys football from church groups to the Labour Movement.[88] This reinforces the point that the absence of patronage for women's teams has been a limiting factor in the development of the game this century. Instead individual managers and players have combined roles too produce significant forms of play. In the first phase of women's football the Secretary/Manager such as Alfred Frankland of Dick, Kerr (later Preston) usually dealt with another Secretary/Manager to arrange fixtures, in addition to training the team, organising transport and dealing with cash.[89] Dick, Kerr were one of at least 26 teams playing in 1951 so it is feasible that the managers would contact each other personally and form a network.[90] From the 1960s to the present, the mass of participation owes much to the female 'prosumer' who plays, manages and administers football.

At the time when Joan Whalley's scrapbook shows her to have played an average of forty-two matches a year in addition to working full time, Fishwick concludes 'Women almost never played organized football'.[91] The widespread acceptance of this view is extended by the supposition that

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[84] Richard Holt *Sport and the British*. p. 39.
[85] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society* p.147.
[86] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society* p.2.
[87] For example 'Dolly Led Stoke (Ladies) to Victory in Cup' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 21 January 1955; '1922 Cup Victory for Stoke Ladies' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 10 February 1968; 'They Were The Champions' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 12 March 1976; 'Survivor Recalls Famous Team' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 18 April 1992.
[88] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society* pp.12-18.
[89] Gail Newsham *In a League of Their Own* London: Scarlet Press 1998; *Corinthian versus Bolton programme* Manchester Athletic Ground, Fallowfield 20 August 1952.
[90] Gail Newsham *In a League of Their Own* p.114.
[91] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society* p.17.

if the teams are largely unknown to us, they will have been isolated in competitive terms and without a sense of community:

> Estimates suggested that towards the end of 1921 there were around 150 women's clubs in England...Many of these clubs probably knew little of each other's existence because of the localized nature of charity competition.[92]

Derek Birley's account of British sport shrugs off the popularity of the munitionettes and post-war games as a fad:

> The fervour was not sustained, partly because wartime mores did not last, and partly because the FA, with troubles enough from male professionalism...felt (women's football) had little to do with soccer proper.[93]

Williams and Woodhouse acknowledge the absence of accessible collections of correspondence, minute books and newspapers.

> The fate of football for women in Britain over the following forty years or more remains, as far as we can tell, almost wholly unresearched.[94]

Six years later, Dave Russell included women's football as a rather shorter section of *Football and the English*.[95] Though brief, the argument places the development of the sport for women as 'One of the most striking aspects of the inter-war and the immediate post-war game.'[96] As one of a number of topics covered under the chapter 'Football, Economy and Society 1919-1939' the argument sets women's football as related to wider patterns of social change. The discussion of regional and occupational unemployment against an overall improvement in material conditions is useful for the analysis of the changes to women's roles between the wars. The discussion could be extended as Alfred Frankland, for example, felt it inappropriate to use women's football during the Second World War for charitable purposes. Rationing also had a large impact.[97] Gail Newsham describes how the Dick, Kerr team were invited to Freckleton in 1949 to lay a wreath

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[92] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' p.93.
[93] Derek Birley *Playing the Game: Sport and British Society 1910-1945* Manchester: Manchester University Press 1995 p.204.
[94] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' pp.93-4
[95] Dave Russell *Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England 1863-1995* Preston: Carnegie 1997 pp. 95-98.
[96] Dave Russell *Football and the English* p. 95.
[97] Gail Newsham. *In a League of Their Own* p. 104.

of 38 red roses on the grave of 38 children killed by an American Liberator which crashed on their school in August 1944.[98] So World War Two was less of a turning point for women's football than the Great War had been, though women players were in evidence in their capacity as local dignitaries.

Academics renowned for their expertise in the analysis of the social and cultural aspects of football have not radically altered their view of women's participation. Tony Mason makes no mention of women playing football from 1863-1915.[99] James Walvin, even with the revised content of the 1994 edition of *The People's Game*, has no indexed reference to women.[100] In 1989 Richard Holt wrote of women and clubs more generally:

> This sociability has been largely male. Female participation in sport has been negligible until recently. Men have kept women out of sport except as helpers... Female *social* participation may have been more widespread than has been realized.[101]

At this time there were 263 English women's football clubs and 7,000 players. England had also won the Mundialito, the unofficial women's World Cup, twice in 1985 and 1988. As is evident from the interviews, sporting sociability, playing because it is fun, is the most frequent response of players surveyed for this study. So though Holt is right in suggesting that women's football was and is a minority activity, female participation has been more widespread than 'negligible' implies.

In 2000, Richard Holt and Tony Mason give figures to support their argument of recent increase which are without reference, but presumably from the FA.

> Women's football, which had been snuffed out after a promising start in the First World War, however, grew dramatically in the 1990s. The unanswered question is this: will the plan to tie women's football to satellite coverage of the men's game work? If it does, football could be on the verge of a breakthrough which was officially unthinkable ten or twenty years ago.[102]

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[98] Gail Newsham *In a League of Their Own!* Chorley: Pride of Place 1994 p.113.
[99] Tony Mason *Association Football* Index.
[100] James Walvin *The People's Game* p. 162.
[101] Richard Holt *Sport and the British* p.348.
[102] Richard Holt and Tony Mason *Sport in Britain* p.12.

There appears to be a contagious academic hunch that women's football is on the cusp of becoming popular, professional or widely accepted.

> It is still premature to talk about a decisive 'breakthrough' for the women's game in Britain even given the evidence of recent progress.[103]

Sue Lopez has pointed out the opportunity to televise a Women's World Cup based in England and backed by Moore, Hurst, Peters and Ramsey and sponsored to the tune of £150,000 was turned down by the WFA, in 1972.[104] Though not a professional league, the tournament would certainly have presented women's elite play as entertainment to potentially millions of viewers with the backing of England heroes six years after England's World Cup victory. Women's football at this time was on the verge of an innovation that was officially discussed and initially accepted by the WFA committee before a revote. Rather than a steady and linear rise in popularity women's football has been characterised by a less regular pattern in which key questions reappear.

An effect of this is to ally previous interest in women's football with novelty and faddishness. Williams and Woodhouse wrote about women's football as an aspect of carnival, ostensibly as a short lived, humorous pastiche of male and female roles.

> Many of the matches played during this period were also mixed sex and were performed in novelty costumes.[105]

Holt and Mason similarly have women's interest after World War One 'snuffed out'.[106] More useful is Russell's explanation that the first phase of interest arose when large numbers of girls and women were the object of welfare policy and football was cheap, able to accommodate a variety of players and flexible in form.[107]

Questionable explanations have been used by academics to suggest that the FA's support was the catalyst in order for women's football to develop as a sport. Williams and Woodhouse used the results of games during the WFA Cup of 1983, some with a goal difference of more than a dozen, to conclude

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[103] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' p.101.
[104] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p.62.
[105] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' p.91.
[106] Richard Holt and Tony Mason *Sport in Britain* p.12.
[107] Dave Russell *Football and the English* p. 94.

> The women's game's lack of any strength in depth and effective grass roots development was proving to be damaging and embarrassing. Who could take the sport seriously?[108]

The joy of the Cup rests on the possibility of meeting a team outside the normal league structure; large scores and unusual results are an inherent part of the tournament. To imply that such results are evidence of poor development and potentially mismatched competition does little to analyse the actual development of leagues and the role of women players. The answer to the rhetorical question is the players, their families, supporters and friends who helped them to play and who recognised their efforts.

Holt and Mason also feel women's place in the history of sport to be a recent phenomenon.

> Women, ethnic minorities and the disabled are more important in the 1990s than they were in the 1950s and we try to explain this.[109]

What this begs is important to whom? This suggests a top-down approach to historiography as they may have been less valuable to sporting authorities but were significant in their own right. Even if it is by omission, the treatment of these groups as minorities is crucial because the process of exclusion and definition is telling (there are, for example, degrees of interpretation that mean some players classified as having disabilities would have been involved). Furthermore, women football fans are damned by faint praise.

> The sudden interest in football from girls was mainly directed at players like Manchester United's David Beckham and Liverpool's Michael Owen. Girls were eager consumers of the footballer as 'hunk'. Young women took what *they* wanted from the game, a good few adopting a ladette attitude along the way.[110]

Amongst these stereotypes comes a point that this study has tried to explore:

> The question was whether female football would attract women that other sports had failed to reach.[111]

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[108] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' p.99.
[109] Richard Holt and Tony Mason *Sport in Britain* p.91.
[110] Richard Holt and Tony Mason *Sport in Britain* p.12.

An extension of this question is, what features make football for women uniquely attractive? This has informed diverse lines of enquiry including sports uniforms, collective exercise and engagement with wider football culture, as well as issues of space and places to play.

There are few texts dedicated to women's football written by enthusiasts and academics. Sue Lopez has been documenting the history of women's football in educational journals since 1979.[112] John Bale described the distribution and difficulty of obtaining space to play in his 1980 piece.[113] Sheila Scraton, writing in 1986, noted the resistance of female PE teachers to girls playing football.[114] Jo Boaler's 1994 article on female underachievement in mathematics played on contemporary educational stereotypes.

> When do girls prefer football to fashion, the answer I believe, is in a mathematics examination...the world of football is still perceived by many girls as almost exclusively male and this alone is good enough reason not to connect football with mathematics. The issue of context and 'reality' in mathematics education is, however, extremely complex.[115]

In the late 1990s women's football became a subject of study in its own right. Alethea Melling and Sheila Scraton have asked if there is any evidence that apart from big teams, there was a widespread uptake of women's football in England.[116] They resist the argument that the interest in women's football in the 1920s was little more than a wartime glitch based on the peculiar circumstances of the time.

However, what continues to challenge researchers is, why football? In attempting to answer this Melling suggests a mixture of ad hoc and formalised activity that was cheap, flexible and able to cater for different groups. That is, as one of many collective and social activities women took part

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[111] Richard Holt and Tony Mason *Sport in Britain*. p.170.
[112] Sue Lopez 'An Investigation of Reasons for Participating in Women's Football' in *Bulletin of Physical Education* Vol 15 1979 pp. 39-47.
[113] John Bale 'Women's Football in England and Wales: a Social-Geographic perspective' in *Physical Education Review* Vol. 3 No. 2 1980 pp. 137-44.
[114] Sheila Scraton 'Images of femininity and the Teaching of Girls Physical Education' in J Evans (ed.) *Physical Education Sport and Schooling: Studies in the Sociology of Physical Education* London: Falmer 1986 pp. 44-66.
[115] Jo Boaler 'When do Girls Prefer Football to Fashion? An analysis of female underachievement in relation to 'realistic' mathematic contexts' *British Educational Research Journal* Vol. 20 No. 5 1994 p 551.
[116] Alethea Melling 'Cultural Differentiation, Shared Aspiration: The Entente Cordiale of International Ladies' Football 1920–45' in *The European Sports History Review* Vol.1 1998; Sheila Scraton et al 'Women and Football – A Contradiction? The Beginnings of Women's Football in Four European Countries' *The European Sports History Review* Vol.1 1998.

in during and immediately after World War One.[117] Young women's welfare was relegated in importance after the war and this combined with the effect of the Great Depression on female work, and hence, leisure. Additionally, subsequent populist women's groups actively supported by the social structure, the Women's Institute, Young Women's Church Association and Girl Guides emphasised accomplishment in the domestic sphere and did not patronise sport generally, football particularly.

Other industries that commonly employed women, for example insurance companies, light engineering and food manufacturing extend the point that the places where women's teams were created show the changing nature of women's work. Lily Parr, Joan Whalley and other Dick, Kerr players had to move from munitions to nursing to support themselves.[118] The Lee's Ladies of Nottingham began as a munitions team and played for approximately six years from 1915 to 1921. After the war the factory became Qualcast and produced lawnmowers and a team revived in the 1960s.[119] The Hulton Getty Picture Collection contains photographs of a Marks and Spencers team leading out to play against Invictas, (later Invicta Plastics) in 1933.[120] Another example was the Raleigh bicycle factory in Nottingham, where women played in the East Midlands League from 1972 to 1988.[121] So there remains a considerable body of work to be done on the social class of participants and the background against which teams were created. This material does raise the point that as women increasingly entered the public arena, in work and leisure, they chose to play football in larger numbers.

Melling's thesis is written in a very accessible style but it is not readily available to the mass of players, administrators and devotees yet. The main interest in writing about, promoting and exploring the issues surrounding the sport has come from enthusiasts. It is to David Williamson's *Belles of the Ball* (1991), Pete Davies' *I Lost My Heart to the Belles* (1996), Sue Lopez's *Women On The Ball*, and Gail Newsham's *In a League of their Own* that the review now turns. Newsham's work originally appeared in 1994 under Pride of Place publishers. However disagreements between Newsham and the publishing house caused considerable financial

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[117] Alethea Melling *Ladies Football: Gender and the Socialisation of Women Football Players in Lancashire 1916-1960* unpublished PhD thesis University of Central Lancashire November 1999 p.10.
[118] Gail Newsham *In a League of their Own* London: Scarlet Press 1998 p.67.
[119] Sheila Rollinson, player, WFA administrator, and coach, Draycott 22 June 2001 photographs and newspapers cuttings of Leys and Qualcast teams.
[120] Hulton Getty Picture Collection *Marks and Spencers versus Invictas at Queens Mead* in Bromley Kent 8 June 1933.
[121] Sheila Rollinson Draycott 22 June 2001 Raleigh All Gold team traced through WFA Newsletters 1972-1988.

difficulty for the author and it was four years before she republished, at the suggestion of Lopez.[122]

Sue Lopez, an ex-professional player who also earns a full-time living from football has written the most comprehensive account of women's football since 1960s. Lopez holds a teaching qualification, a Master's degree, a visiting lectureship at Leicester University's Norman Chester Centre for Football Research, is one of five women A Licence coaches and was recently awarded an MBE for her services to football. However *Women on the Ball*, though wide ranging, does not extend the analysis to include the average player. The diplomatic tone is reminiscent of the circumspect response of elite players in this study. However, Lopez and four other A Licence coaches have been overlooked for the appointment as England coach in favour of a candidate who had, at that time, no coaching qualifications. Rare comments regarding the FA power base are criticisms by omission rather than analysis. The work is more revealing about both a woman's professional career and the most successful team of the 1970s, Southampton. Lopez also shows foresight in suggesting the end of Southampton's success as due to the players all being of similar age.[123]

Sue Lopez has a unique position in the community of women football players. Indeed the variety of her career and her considerable achievements support two points in this thesis. Some women are drawn into multiple roles in football and so individuals become very influential within the game. Given the comments above, Lopez is uncharacteristically strident on the importance of 1966 and the FA Factsheets series paraphrase her views throughout:

> The England victory in the 1966 World Cup proved to be the catalyst for a dramatic renaissance in the women's game and this time the upsurge of interest would be sustained. For a group of women football players in Southampton, it was to be the beginning of a long and successful career.[124]

However, as Gail Newsham points out, 1965 saw the last game of a depleted Preston who folded due to a lack of players.[125] Manchester Corinthians began in 1949 and ended in the early 1970s.[126] Sheila Stocks and many of the older Doncaster Belles began to play in 1969 after selling Golden Goals tickets at Doncaster Rovers because the job gave them free entry to watch the club they had

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[122] Gail Newsham Chorley Lancashire 16 June 1999.
[123] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p. 88 'The key players were aging and other left to channel their energies elsewhere'.
[124] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p.31.
[125] Gail Newsham *In a League of Their Own* p.140.

supported all their lives. Knowing that they could not join a men's team, they clubbed together and initially played at five and six a side until sufficient numbers joined to form a full team.[127]. Stewarton Thistle first played in 1961.[128] Fodens began around 1955.[129] EMGALS began in early 1967 and Southampton in 1966.[130] This suggests that the history of women's football is not discontinuous nor was 1966 the catalyst it has been held to be not least because football for women became popular at around this time in other countries. This view also assumes that teams were formed for sports-specific purposes and yet from the examples above it is possible to see a pattern of work-based teams, representative teams, clubs formed by football enthusiasts from a local area and, often, a combination of the three. So in order to develop a more comprehensive view of the social background of the players, each team would have to be analysed for the mixture of colleagues, friends, relatives and athletes drawn into the squad by various networks. Very often teams changed their focus and so, for example, Dick, Kerr's became Preston and drew players from as far as Scotland. The Cunard shipping team became Southampton and highly qualified women like Sue Lopez would play alongside the administrators and typists of the original team. So women organising work and care responsibilities in order to play football and having access to work and leisure opportunities because they did participate are issues that the chapter on tradition and community begins to address.

Sue Lopez is more diplomatic, especially about the FA, than Pete Davies, a journalist who has written extensively about football. *I Lost My Heart to the Belles* details a year following Doncaster Belles, the most successful women's team of recent times. The first excerpt is Lopez's description of the way Belles' skipper, Gill Coulthard, lost the England captaincy and the second is Davies' explanation of the same event:

> The captain in 1997 is Debbie Bampton... She took over the captaincy from Carol McCune when Carol retired in 1985. Gill Coulthard took over the captaincy in 1991 when Debbie was injured. Debbie regained the post from Gill in 1995.[131]

> It got worse and they took the captaincy off Gill. Here she was, Copeland's model player – and he told her four hours before the game she wasn't captain any more, and he told the team as he sent them out from the dressing room.[132]

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[126] Manchester Corinthians Programme.
[127] Sheila Edmunds (nee Stocks), founder Doncaster Belles player and now coach, Bolton 12 May 1999.
[128] Elsie Cook's Scrapbook.
[129] Jess Macbeth Scrapbook of mother's playing career 12 September 2000.
[130] Sue Foulkes, Emgals then Leicester City player 1967-1997, Leicester 15 May 2000.
[131] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p.106.
[132] Pete Davies *I Lost My Heart* p.122.

His increasing affection for the team is clear in his descriptions of their courage, which he feminises as feisty, plucky, spirited and exuberant behaviour. The difficulty of finding the right vocabulary with which to describe players is reflected in the anachronistic terms used in this excerpt in which he interviews a player about a friend who has broken her leg while playing.

> The casual observer could easily have put her down for just a larrikin, a late night clubber, a not give a damn larkabout...So I asked how she'd feel herself if it were her in plaster for those long six weeks, and she smiled. 'Wouldn't be able to dance, would I?' Then the smile vanished.[133]

Davies allies football with transcendence out of the somewhat Orwellian picture of working-class life.

> Kaz and Gill, they've been halfway round the world, and what would they have been without football? Gill Coulthard, she was a rogue, she'd probably be in trouble, her brothers have been – she'd be going nowhere, anyway. Like too many women in pit villages, three or four kids, grossly overweight, down club every weekend, nothing in her life. Or what would Kaz have done? Go round Goldthorpe and Barnsley getting drunk on a weekend – and that's the summit of your life as a young woman?[134]

The initiative of the players is evident throughout in terms of self-discipline, dedication and intelligence so it is difficult to assess his intent in taking such a stance. On the one hand it may emphasise the difficulties inherent in participating in leisure activities in a depressed male-dominated community following the closure of the mines, particularly for women. On another level it may try to argue a case for football as a sport for women but throughout Davies effectively caricatures the players, 'not for the faint-hearted, the Belles can out-bloke the fellas' and so this has little conviction.[135] The durability of Gill Coulthard's international career from 1981 to 2000 and the excellence of Karen Walker's goal scoring record could not be maintained without considerable application and commitment on their part and this should come across more strongly. In terms of social class it would also be misleading to generalise from this depiction that women who play are looking for some kind of escape from a particular geographical location or way of life. As representatives of the regional community women players draw support from, and also give pride to, sections of the local population as the next chapter shows. From being

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[133] Pete Davies *I Lost My Heart* p. 62.
[134] Pete Davies *I Lost My Heart* Foreword.
[135] Pete Davies *I Lost My Heart* Cover.

sponsored by local businesses (Dick, Kerr's, Marks and Spencer, Fodens, Cunard) to representation in the local press (Stoke Evening Sentinel) to civic receptions (Preston Guild, Salford Festival) the players would be tied to their region and the citizens of it and Chapter Four discusses this as an aspect of public and private memory.

Unlike Davies' single year with Doncaster Belles Gail Newsham's *In A League of Their Own* is a chronological history of the Dick, Kerr Ladies team from 1917-1965. Gail Newsham holds valuable sources for the researcher and is driven in her promotion of women's football. She has the boots of Lily Parr, given by the player's nephew, the scrapbooks of Alfred Frankland and diaries of Joan Whalley and Whalley's medals and memorabilia. She ran an international tournament for a decade and was instrumental in the reunion of Dick, Kerr Ladies before many of them died. However, the text doesn't dwell on Newsham's contribution to women's football.

Read in conjunction with David Williamson's *Belles of the Ball* these three texts give a brief historical overview of the development of the sport in England and beyond, blending fiction and non-fiction. Williamson's book is the most academic of the four in terms of primary research and the degree of analysis of salient issues surrounding women's participation until 1922. For example, his analysis of the munitionettes describes large numbers of young women on the move to centres away from home and collected together in places where there was little entertainment. He suggests that at the time of the 1921 ban there were 150 teams.[136] *Belles of the Ball* charts the key dates for women's football and includes a number of photographs, including Nettie Honeyball, the captain of the English Ladies team in 1895. Williamson's analysis of the broader trends is evident from the following excerpt:

> By early 1920 it was no idle kick about on a ploughed field with a few curious onlookers on the touchlines; it was Stamford Bridge, White Hart Lane and Goodison Park... clubs were springing up from a variety of backgrounds. One such was Lyons Ladies, made up from girls working in the various Lyons cafes around London.[137]

However, this book is now out of print and future researchers will either have to obtain a second hand copy or access the information through one of the many serialised versions in WFA newsletters. The inter-war years are obviously in need of further consideration in the historiography of women's football. This is treated in the following chapter as an issue of

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[136] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* p.104.
[137] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* p. 86.

tradition and community, particularly the extent to which a discontinuous sense of history in women's football has contributed to the idea of female participation as an aspect of recent popular culture.

There is a significant history of women writing about women's experience of sport as the excellent anthology *Crossing Boundaries*[138] demonstrates, but this is not the case with women's football. This is clearly evident in early twentieth century fictional accounts of women playing football written by men, including 'Ray of the Rovers', 'Bess of Blacktown' and other stories which have been discussed in academic papers such as "The Working Class Heroine in Popular Football Fiction, 1915-25".[139] However, as Dave Russell points out, marriage may lift Bess or Ray out of the working-class, but it does not then automatically rule out a continued football career.[140]In the recent fiction writers can be seen to recycle the essentially masculine nature of the sport. For example, Richard Allen's *Skinhead Girls* related playing and supporting football with attempts by young women to enter and imitate male sub-cultures.[141] The drama piece and successful film *Gregory's Girl* and the more recent children's books such as *Joanna's Goal* by Michael Hardcastle and *Dulcie Dando* by Sue Stops see the female player as exceptional.[142]

The essentially masculine nature of sport is satirized by Simon Cheetham in *Gladys Protheroe ...Football Genius!* Not only does diminutive Gladys earn 65 'bonnets' for national women's appearances; she plays professionally for Watford, becomes England manager, manager of Real Madrid, and helps England to win the World Cup. The excesses of the style can be seen from this excerpt which teases the reader with bogus facts and analysis:

> It was the beginning of an era when women played a part in English men's football. ...Gladys actually went on to appear 28 times for Watford... Nancy Dixon played at right back for Fulham in the 1947/48 season, and Emily Cuthbert made one appearance for Aston Villa.[143]

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[138] Susan Bandy and Anne Darden *Crossing Boundaries* Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics 1999.
[139] Peter Seddon *A Football Compendium* Wetherby: The British Library 1995 p321 for a comprehensive list of authors writing about women's football for *The Football and Sports Library* published by Amalgamated Press 1921-1923; Alethea Melling 'The Working Class Heroine in Popular Football Fiction 1915-25' *The International Journal of The History of Sport,* Vol.16, No.1 April 1998 pp.97-122.
[140] Dave Russell *Football and the English* p. 97.
[141] Richard Allen *Skinhead Girls* London: New English Library 1972.
[142] Andrew Bethell *Gregory's Girl an adaptation of Bill Forsyth's original film script by Andrew Bethell* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, c1983; Michael Hardcastle *Joanna's Goal* London: Hardcover 1990Sue Stops *Dulcie Dando* London: Hippo 1992.
[143] Simon Cheetham *Gladys Protheroe...Football Genius* London: Juma 1994 p.16.

This text is noteworthy because it makes links between other cultural forms and football, for example popular music. Much of the humour derives from in-jokes which require the reader to know the significance of the Bernabau, the bracelet scandal in Mexico in 1970 and the patronage of football by stars such as Elton John.

Whilst Cheetham places a woman at the heart of football history, *Hem and Football* is a rather less successful attempt to use football as a symbol of resistance to the traditional role of women in Indian society.[144] Hem is a truculent young girl. The playing scenes are brief, formulaic and the overall style rather hackneyed. Football is not the avenue for self-discovery or self-fulfilment that it is for Gladys. Hem's wilfulness eventually causes her to lose her place on the team and her independence. Her immaturity is indulged through football and though she is unlike the stereotype of the submissive Hindu girl but she is also unlike the other players who are prepared to be disciplined in their training.

In contrast, *Astroturf Blonde (It's a Man's Game – Sometimes)* and the paperback edition of the same work, *Astroturf Blonde: Up Front and Onside in a Man's Game*, give an account of a women park player's experience.[145] Her criticism, and subsequent rejection of, women's football and her enjoyment of the exceptional status as the only female player ignores issues around mixed sport more generally. In order to pursue a career as a journalist Rudd had to move into related areas in order to break into sports. Viewed as an instalment in woman journalist's experience, as opposed to an individual choice of recreation, the narrative reveals the limits and the benefits of interpreting one's actions in isolation. Furthermore, it illustrates that some women journalists will distance themselves from women's sport in order to protect their own exceptional status.

In addition, David Pannick's pamphlet for the Equal Opportunities Commission, regarding Theresa Bennett (referred to in detail in Chapter Three) is useful for setting into context assumptions about female-appropriate sport in legal discourse specifically. The opinion of the most authoritative counsel on sport and the law in England makes this a key text in understanding how gender differentiated sport has become translated into legislation.[146]

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[144] Nalinaksha Bhattacharya *Hem and Football* London: Secker and Warburg 1992.
[145] Alyson Rudd *Astroturf Blonde (It's a Man's Game – Sometimes)* London: Headline 1998; Alyson Rudd *Astroturf Blonde: Up Front and Onside in a Man's Game* London: Headline 1999.
[146] David Pannick *Sex Discrimination in Sport* London: Equal Opportunities Commission 1983.

4. Conclusion

The oral and privately held evidence disputes a historiography that interprets the ban on women's football as leading to a long period of virtual apathy. Nor does it suggest that, without the support of the national association, the sport could not survive in the organised way in which we understand modern football. The failure to challenge the 1921 ruling and to invent an alternative administrative structure has been treated with narrative closure. This amplifies the importance of the ban in a way that makes the decision appear to mark the 'end of an era'. From this perspective, England's 1966 victory is the single event causing change to happen in a new era. The recent spell of interest is orchestrated around the polarisation of gender drawn from the previous era in a way that makes it appear a 'natural' process of history. Stereotypical assumptions about the relationship between women and football do not generally lie within a biological framework, most academics cite social tradition and cultural determination as more significant in creating gender differences in physical ability, interest and capacity to compete. Nevertheless powerful scholastic attitudes remain that girls are less adept at football than boys and women have been much less involved and capable of competing than men. Supposedly 'feminine' characteristics such as poise, grace, control and finesse are used to describe great male players and female biology, socialization and cultural norms are argued to conspire to make a boisterous, noisy, contact sport alien to the majority of girls and women. So the emphasis seems to be on acceptance of gender differentiation, as opposed to the way that feminists' use of the word difference and the desirability of reproducing this distinction in recent developments.

This has the consequence of setting the moment of struggle, the moment for effecting change firmly in the past. The perspective in this work is not to renounce the earlier form of women's football as a moment that is over, as is the current fashion, but to rework some basic assumptions in the present context. This is a fundamental question for the meaning we give to women's football but also to the history of football more generally. One of the more positive changes taking place in recent years is a growing public awareness of women in sport and other leisure activities. However, even objective-looking numerical data can be deceptive as historical or contemporary evidence without an understanding of the ideological framework within which the figures were gathered. The oral history excerpts which introduce this chapter therefore show a different set of principles in operation.

Since one of the questions of this thesis was to consider how we know and can talk about women's football, this pattern is meant to resist the idea of historical or narrative closure. They also question the parabolic rise and brief glory of the first phase of women's football followed by an abrupt fall to end one era before a surge of interest either following 1966 or in the 1990s. So through the idea of a revival of interest the thesis proposes that continuities remain while the model of English women's football that became established after the 1960s is of a very different order. For the rest of the thesis this confrontation with a historiography that seemed to indicate broad consensus about the shape of women's involvement provided something new as the various interconnections and discontinuities presented themselves as themes for each chapter. Rather more like a spiral than a parabola, these influences on female involvement in football are revisited but alter over time; the number of participants at any one moment is a function of this rather than the defining explanation. This enables an examination of how ideas are articulated in relation to the material underpinnings of women's relationship to football. This is discussed both in Chapter Two, in relation to the formulation of community, and in Chapter Four with respect to the transmission of memory. Chapter Three gives a rather different treatment of the same idea by making abstract ideas about gender and football, specifically their formulation into educational policy, legislative regulation and professional practice transparent.

To put it simply, the 'tradition of the new' in women's involvement in English football seemed too neat. A way of conceptualising gender difference as social and symbolic that was very popular in the 1970s informed my research questions. That is, if anatomy is no longer destiny why do we still distinguish different fortunes for male and female bodies in and through football in 2002? What conceptual and communal stories are we telling ourselves about ourselves? Chapter Five explores the experiential aspects of women's play to suggest that the idea of difference needs to be revised to focus on multiplicity. The metaphors used to describe this project most often refer to a journey, a process or a trail because the idea is to resist resolution or closure and to end with a chapter that suggests football as both corporeal and cultural play. The ways that player's speak about and construct their identity shows both improvisation and innovation. The initial questions about a degree of consensus on behalf of players therefore gave way to a perception of narrative patterns. Rather than suggesting areas where opposition and contradiction remained or had been resolved the results are sometimes more questions that we have to ask about the players' point of view of their sport. Discordance and lack of synchronisation within the sport also prompted the need to detect the s between individual elements and the surrounding context. There is throughout a creative tension between my

perspective and the various views of the players and showing the contradictions inherent in that framework are a critical part of my conviction that small adjustment and larger transformation alike are possible. For example, in the next chapter the contested control of women's football, particularly between communities of players and in an independent tradition, has been treated as a subject in itself.

CHAPTER TWO

TRADITION AND COMMUNITY IN ENGLISH WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

1. Introduction

The previous section discussed a number of popular and academic narratives about players. This chapter begins by considering the relationship between tradition and community in the rise of women's football. The discussion focuses on the historical overview to trace the transition from the spectator-supported forms of women's football as entertainment to a more prevalent participatory sport without a large live or televised audience. The kinds of competitive arrangements reflect specific senses of community better understood in terms of a long tradition. Continuities are evident, however the meanings attached to these activities would have also changed over time. During the century, as sport generally has become more commercialised, women's football became less popular with spectators. Women players who were feted as local dignitaries before the 1960s may have found it interesting and enjoyable to tour the country in order to play in front of large crowds but they would not have thought of this as a viable alternative to full-time paid work. Women's football as spectacle gradually became less familiar and the idea of it as primarily a leisure activity took hold. This is not to say that the motivation of the players was any different and for this reason the production of community through competition is the most enduring aspect of women's football culture in England.

To what extent does the past matter to those who play today and what are the mechanisms which create a sense of a shared past and present? The connection raises questions which will also affect the future, for instance, is one of the reasons for the sport's relative lack of hold on the public imagination a failure to create a 'community' in women's football? At the same time that women express several kinds of freedom when they participate, equality is currently contested and unrealizable precisely because there is no consensus about what it means: should the aim be, for example, mixed senior football or separate but equal provision? Should we be developing a professional league for women or allowing elite women to play in the present professional leagues? What kinds of tactics are appropriate in pursuing any or each of those objectives? Women frequently emphasized the similarities between the sexes yet pressed for equal but separate forms of football. This apparent contradiction was intriguing. In trying to examine what was meant, it became clear that participants were not overtly radical in their aspirations or in the

means employed to effect change. Nevertheless playing football appeared to be more than a lifestyle choice, like belonging to a certain gym. For the women who do play, the experience of team sport involving the simultaneous expression of sameness and difference was sufficiently engaging and celebratory to make it worth taking part.

The nature of the topic therefore precludes unequivocal conclusions about a radical or liberal feminist perspective in studying women who play football. Some developments appear to support the position that collaboration between women players and established bureaucracies is the way forward. Supporters would point out that women's football under FA control has access to increased resources, more structured playing opportunities and centralized administrative co-ordination. Opponents interpret these benefits as largely cosmetic because they have yet to serve as the basis of more far-reaching alteration to the provision of football for women or to the structures of football itself. As this work makes evident, football authorities have acted as benign patrons of women's football only lately and periods of increased female participation have not lead in any direct way to reform. However, though a radical revision within football is required to bring about fundamental transformation, this argument will not go far enough for opponents of competitive sport and its associated values. Nevertheless, most women players who were interviewed in the course of this study did not want to play a different form of football, either as an alternative game or as a critique of the values of sport. In fact, women's right to play the standard form of the game without modification to the size of the field of play, the length of a match, the number of substitutes and so forth remains a moot point.

This said, the data collected and collated here is intended to enable an assessment of the balance of conservatism and progressivism in women's football. This section looks at the historical background as well as examining various kinds of community in women's football. In order to explore the past, present and potential future, female players' interpretations of the sport are juxtaposed with other diverse texts from newspaper articles and photographs to personal scrapbooks and match programmes. Widespread historical and contemporary support for a different game for women appears, partly, a function of administrative control by male elites but is also as a means of protecting space for female play. Another area of continuity is that the women's game has long called for more financial assistance and media coverage. A separate but related issue is that in the more recent era of equal but different forms of the game, women coaches and administrators would like to be more recognised within the current structures of

football. In order to summarize why this has yet to translate to more widespread demands for change, some of the structural issues surrounding women's football are a starting point.

In English culture women's presence in football is not readily apparent. Meanwhile the public memory of men's football as the national sport is clearly confirmed. In large cities and small villages throughout England there are not just pitches for men and boys to play on but evidence of paraphernalia associated with the identity of a football community, from road signs to club houses to permanently erected goalposts on school playing fields. We can take a stadium tour to visit the site of the game even when there is no action, or entertain corporate clients in the restaurant of Premiership and Football League grounds. Fans can, and do, demonstrate their enthusiasm by visiting each and every Football League ground in the country; perhaps becoming aficionados of the facilities each offers. In the small village where I was born, my father could take his grandson to play on the same pitch where my great grandfather played.

In contrast, there are, as yet, no memorials or separate grounds for women players, though uniquely, the most prominent independent women's club, Doncaster Belles, has recently been granted planning permission to construct a small stadium.[1] More importantly there are no sites to which memory can attach itself. Nor is there evidence of women's participation in, say, signage, commonly known club names in towns and villages or the landscape. Here again, the Belles are exceptional as they have a national reputation in their own right unlike other elite teams who take their names from men's clubs, such as Arsenal. However, using privately-held material made it has been possible to characterise some processes of the construction and maintenance of community in women's football. The collections reveal a co-operative of contacts dating back to 1888 with clubs at once local in identity and widespread in their rivalry. Several teams claimed themselves 'the best' or 'foremost' exponents of the women's game in Britain. This has continued until the 1990s and now the women's game mirrors the structures of the men's in the accumulation of double or treble honours.[2]

During the First World War and up to 1921, women's teams could fill League grounds past capacity on occasion, but from that time to the present the non-playing public have generally known very little about the form and style of women's football. In conversation, people frequently ask if women play for ninety minutes, on full size pitches and so forth. The

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[1] Michael Wallace, Club Chair Doncaster Belles, Doncaster 11 August 1999.
[2] Combinations of the Women's Premier League, Women's Premier League Cup and Women's FA Cup.

assumption that the sport must be very different from the men's game informs these questions. The internalisation of the common-sense idea that women can't play, that they are physically incapable, is evident in these, mostly innocent, enquiries. This sense of the unusual is reinforced by the human geography of our rural and urban centres. Male participation in football is so ubiquitous that we know about it even if we don't want to. To know when and where women play, we have to take the time to find out.

Therefore continuity is clearly evident in that after the 1921 ban on women's football, for the rest of the century, would be characterised by a struggle for physical space in which to play. This became accentuated in the post 1960 period as increased female participation rates corresponded with new demands on pitches.[3] The partial integration of women players into men's and boys' clubs since 1960 is an example of the current manifestation of a continuing issue rather than a new problem. Without the benefit of this longer view this could be interpreted as liberal paternalism. Rather, it is often a means of accessing lottery funding and as such is motivated more by financial pragmatism than enlightenment. Should the lottery funding mechanism change, it would be reasonable to conclude that the relationship between male clubs and women's teams would also be affected.

As an example of both the pressure on pitches and the uncertain nature of the integration, Loughborough teams are typical of women's clubs. Loughborough Dynamo Women were funded for three years from 1999-2001 by the male team who shared the same name, who in turn, received lottery funding as a result of having a women's team affiliated. In 2001 the women moved to Loughborough United due to their dissatisfaction at having over half their fixtures cancelled in 2000-2001 by Dynamo club officials concerned about the 'state of the pitch'. As a result of the affiliation United will consequently be able to apply for lottery funding for an additional three years. Loughborough University Students Women's team moved to Loughborough Dynamo in 2001 to become Dynamo Women.[4] The fact of having women affiliates is more significant than who they are or how the sport is developed. The tension between these micro examples and the larger picture of male patronage would be a rewarding area for further research.

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[3] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society 1910-1950* Manchester: Manchester University Press 1989 p.5
[4] Meetings with Loughborough United, Loughborough Dynamo and Loughborough Students 3-24 May 2001.

The development of football for women has depended to an extent upon attributes and definitions of what it is not, as exemplified in the convention of 'football' and 'women's football' and in the Laws of the Game by notions of 'gentlemanly' conduct. The research for this study has begun to answer what women construct the meaning of their play to be. There has yet to be a systematic description of the clubs in the women's football leagues from 1960 to the present day. The historiography led me to test to what extent this was now possible given the basic administrative procedures of the WFA. In attempting to produce maps to show the distribution of the women's clubs in the 1980s in appendices E-J of this work, my intention was to build on Bale's work but also to examine the reasons for the demise of the WFA at a time when interest from players was increasing. The second dimension was to assess the importance of the incorporation of the WFA into the football establishment and to describe the effect of that change on football for and by women.

In order to set an increased participation in context, football for women is a useful example of the trend in sport development in England to become a numbers game. FIFA and national associations are rarely careful not to overstate numbers in their optimism for the sport. FIFA have estimated that approximately 20 million women world-wide play football of which 8 million play in the US.[5] The English FA estimates that between 35,000 and 41,000 females play, of which 15,000 are junior players.[6] Since the FIFA numbers are based on information volunteered by associations including unregistered players and the FA numbers include duplicated players and estimates, they should be treated with care. Nor do they provide information about those who are excluded from the figures, for example by regional, cultural, racial, economic or other circumstances. The ability of football to propose a differentiated vision for women is a key question. Degrees of integration differ in different cultures. In some instances players and administrators speak about women's football as a different sport to male football and feel that in doing so they are creating a space for women to play that is socially acceptable. Often this is overtly to counteract the notion that they are trying to compete with men. In some cases it is perceived as the same sport but played differently; perhaps with an emphasis on skill rather than physicality.

The first part of this chapter explores spaces to play and a sense of community before moving on to discuss the public and private sources available to the researcher of women's football who is

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[5] FIFA Survey *The Big Count* Zurich 3 April 2001; online www.fifa.com/survey.

looking to construct an image of the various constituent groups. The second section is concerned with discussing a variety of media in relation to the idea of a constructed identity. It concludes by suggesting some issues that would need to be resolved in taking forward the compilation of a collection to recognise the contribution of women to football, such as has begun in Scotland. The chapter therefore has three aims: to outline aspects of women's football culture, to trace trends between public and private sources and to describe the issues surrounding the compilation of collections of various group identities.

Museums and collections of the lived culture of a sport fix memory to certain dates, places and people. This has been a feature of recent academic interest in football. In the late 1990s the work of Redhead, Allison and Tomlinson argued the need to examine the link between sporting leisure and popular culture.[7] The emphasis of these authors on linking cultural analysis and history with sport reflects the recent increase in inter-disciplinary research. However, though the history of women's sport has been increasingly covered of late, little analysis of the culture of women's sport has been undertaken.[8] Crucial to this research has been the need to collect and analyse artefacts associated with women's football in order to establish whether there is any sense of an autonomous culture.

The tone the official public relations releases relating to women's football are decidedly forward-looking and self-serving in praise of recent initiatives. Sources which enabled me to critically evaluate this view were available in private compilations, for example newspaper reports of matches, and images, usually from postcards or photographs. My initial intention was to explore the relationship between these items and contemporary women players' view of their role in a longer tradition. The responses highlighted the recent concern of football authorities to attract girls to play a distinctly feminised brand of their main product. In attempting to control the public face of the women's game, the Football Association in England and FIFA globally, must have a perceived 'client' cohort which may or may not reflect those who actually play. Therefore

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[6] Football Association Http://www.the-fa.org.womens 30 July 2001however see the footnotes above for the disparity in FA numbers.

[7] Steve Redhead *Post-Fandom and the Millennial Blues: The Transformation of Soccer Culture* London: Routledge 1997; Lincoln Allison (ed.) *Taking Sport Seriously* Chelsea School Research Centre Oxford: Meyer and Meyer 1998; Alan Tomlinson *The Game's Up: Essays in the Cultural Analysis of Sport, Leisure and Popular Culture (Arena 15)* Aldershot: Ashgate 1999.

[8] Sheila Fletcher *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education 1880-1980* London: Athlone 1984; Sheila Scraton *Shaping up to Womanhood: Gender and Girls' Physical Education* Buckingham: Open University Press 1992; Jennifer Hargreaves *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport* London: Routledge 1994; Jennifer Hargreaves *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* London: Routledge 2000.

those who do play may or may not buy into ideas of modernity. The focus then moves on to examine the value given to items by their conservators and, in turn, how this affects the transmission of community in women's football.

2. Competition, Community and Control in Women's Football

i. Spaces and Places to Play

The official memory of women's football was set by the 1921 FA ban that declared the game was 'unsuitable' for women and banned them from playing on the pitches of FA and League affiliates.[9] The FA acknowledged that it was impossible to stop women playing *per se* but those who did participate were seen to behave in an inappropriate manner, in places where they ought not to be. This has had a profound effect on women's football culture and still shapes the sport in material respects today. One consequence is that there are no fixed and discrete local or national sites which locate the memory of women's football. This is not specifically an English phenomenon; for instance, in the United States collegiate and social teams are often part of multi-sport ventures. In Scandinavia sports clubs may be multi-sport for both sexes. In Africa, though there is less of a problem with the containment of sports grounds, there are taboos specifically concerning women's presence on pitches used by men.[10]

The problem of where to play has been a longstanding one. In the 1920s the cricket authorities, after initially offering space for women to play, joined the ban; perhaps because the 1930s was an important time in the growth of cricket for women and space became a premium in these grounds too. More recently, the Sport for All policy did little after 1970 to assist with playing fields, preferring instead to offer multi-sport centres, with outdoor Astroturf pitches where the main use was reserved for men's hockey and football.[11] Nevertheless, the withdrawal of FA support did not, in effect, end women's football in its early form. From 1921 to the end of the ban in 1972, players and managers of women's teams were ingenious in their use of places to play. A Weymouth side played against Preston at Portland Borstal in front of a crowd of 500, followed by refreshments at the British Legion Hall in 1946.[12] Public areas were frequently used and many

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[9] Football Association Consultative Committee Minutes 5 December 1921in David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* Devon: R&D Associates p. 63 two months earlier the gate receipts had been taken over by clubs staging the games.
[10] Kedi Thomas *2nd World Women and Sport Conference* Windhoek Namibia 28 May 1998 a menstruating woman player conjures up bad spirits, harmful to male players, for example.
[11] Alan Tomlinson *The Game's Up* p. 46.
[12] *Lancashire Evening Post* 18 June 1946 in Joan Whalley's Scrapbook held by Gail Newsham.

matches were played on local recreation grounds.[13] Other pitches used in the years 1946-1948 by one team alone included Co-op sports grounds, Clitheroe FC, Burnley Police sports ground, Fulwood Barracks, Walmer Bridge Council school ground, Bamber Bridge Training College sports ground and the ICI sports ground.[14] This use of private and public space reflects the dubious status of the game; it is unlikely that the players would otherwise have visited a borstal, though presumably at least some of the 500 spectators were there of their own choice.

For women football players the right to play still entails negotiating access to space. The role of public parks continues to be particularly significant. However access to pitches is an ongoing problem for junior and women's football and, indeed, other outdoor sports requiring turf. Fishwick details the problems of junior football from the beginning of the century as a lack of playing fields and resources to maintain them. Like women's football, schools football was not the most important location for boys to develop their playing skills.

> One reason for this is the strength of the game in boys' culture...working class boys played football in places where no blade of grass had been seen since the industrial revolution.[15]

As the previous chapter has made clear, we know little about girls' participation in street, playground or school football. However a picture is beginning to emerge of the place of football for women in England as being tied to green areas in rural and urban centres. This may seem an obvious comment. However, it contrasts with street football in boys' culture and indoor female football in Scandinavian countries, to name but two examples. Consequently, the tradition of playing a winter team sport outdoors, on grass, is a feature of women's football not to be overlooked either in explaining its popularity amongst players or in accounting for the absence of mass female participation. At the same time as access to pitches continues to be a problem for participants, in other respects since the 1960s, greater participation for women (as for men and boys) has undoubtedly been assisted by communications developments such as access to personal forms of motorised transport and the telephone.[16]

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[13] Joan Whalley Scrapbook recreation grounds and parks used in the years 1946-1948 included Longford Park; Chatham and Gillingham; Erias Park, Colwyn Bay; Souacre Fold, Stalybridge; Lockyer Avenue Playing Fields; Giant Axe Field and Longfield Park.
[14] Joan Whalley Scrapbook.
[15] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society* p. 10 cites the introduction of Sunday football as a 'massive and enduring boost to junior football'.
[16] *Social Trends No.31* Office of National Statistics 2001 pp. 208-209 figures 12.1-12.3 'The increase in the use of cars occurred among all age groups and both genders'. p. 209.

The gradual repeal of the taboo of Sunday football in the 1960s had the unintended effect of creating a physical and temporal space for women to play. The rules of the Football Association state that, 'No Club, Player or Official, Referee or Linesman shall be compelled to participate in Football on Sunday'. In practice, lack of pitches means that playing on Sunday is unavoidable for women.[17] This has prevented some established male leagues from contributing to the integration of women's football. For example the Hellenic league, a senior male Level 3 league in the national pyramid of football, schedules matches Monday to Saturday and to change to Sunday football would need the agreement of the member clubs.[18]

Women's League and Cup matches usually take place on Sunday afternoon, generally on pitches already used that day, and the day before, by senior or junior male teams. In the case of Loughborough United the women's afternoon fixtures take place at home on alternate weeks, with a junior male team playing on the remaining afternoons. Another junior male team uses the pitch on Sunday mornings and the senior male team has sole use of the pitch on Saturdays. It is quite usual for facilities and clubhouses to remain untidy from the day before, or for match officials to cry off after refereeing in the morning, or for the playing surface to be extremely cut up. Sunday licensing laws meant that, until very recently, pub closing hours coincided with kick off. A mother and daughter told me about the fear they felt when they were subject to drunken abuse from men making their way home while the women were competing on a public park in Peterborough. Players as young as fourteen were verbally assaulted and a police escort was called to assist them from the field of play after the referee abandoned the game.[19] The location and timing of women's football matches and their place in rank order of importance for facilities materially affects the players' experience of the sport.

Access to pitches has also affected the national distribution of teams. During the period of this study women's football has become an increasingly southern and urban phenomenon. For example, the Greater London League stood in 1992 at 69 teams and by 1998 had 87 teams affiliated compared with the other women's leagues of 50 or less.[20] However, though there has

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[17] The Football Association *The Football Association Handbook Season 1998-99* London: The Football Association Ltd p.17.
[18] Brian King Press Officer/Secretary Hellenic League telephone conversation 25 June 2001.
[19] Angela Henson, Kelly Henson and Natalie Henson Peterborough 12 May 1999.
[20] WFA Address List 1992 448/450 Hanging Ditch The Corn Exchange Manchester M4 3ES) pp.2-19; Football Association *Women's Football Directory of Leagues and Clubs 1997-1998* London: The Football Association Ltd.

been a shift, rural and suburban teams continue to dominate the smaller leagues, as they did when John Bale wrote in 1982:

> Broadly women's football is a southern sport...of the remaining counties, Hereford/Worcester, Cheshire and Cumbria are relatively high-status 'suburban' counties. Women's soccer is also something of a rural activity.[21]

In elite terms, the following table of winners of the WFA Cup, later renamed the FA Women's Challenge Cup, presents a picture of women's teams affiliated to Football League clubs, particularly based in London, beginning to dominate top flight competition. However, throughout the history of the cup there are examples of independent teams reaching the finals and the encouraging endurance of Doncaster Belles gives independent women's teams significant and persistent representation.

Table 2.1 WFA Cup Winners

	WFA CUP Winners	**Finalists**
1971	Southampton	Stewarton and Thistle
1972	Southampton	Lee's Ladies
1973	Southampton	Westhorn United
1974	Fodens	Southampton
1975	Southampton	Warminster
1976	Southampton	QPR
1977	QPR	Southampton
1978	Southampton	QPR
1979	Southampton	Lowestoft
1980	St Helens	Preston North End
1981	Southampton	St Helens
1982	Lowestoft	Cleveland Spartans

[21] John Bale *Sport and Place: A Geography of Sport in England, Scotland and Wales* London: Hurst 1982 p. 53.

1983	Doncaster Belles	St Helens
1984	Howbury Grange	Doncaster Belles
1985	Friends of Fulham	Doncaster Belles
1986	Norwich	Doncaster Belles
1987	Doncaster Belles	St Helens
1988	Doncaster Belles	Leasowe Pacific
1989	Leasowe Pacific	Friends of Fulham
1990	Doncaster Belles	Friends of Fulham
1991	Millwall Lionesses	Doncaster Belles
1992	Doncaster Belles	Red Star Southampton
1993	Arsenal	Doncaster Belles
1994	Doncaster Belles	Knowsley United
1995	Arsenal	Liverpool
1996	Croydon	Liverpool
1997	Millwall Lionesses	Wembley
1998	Arsenal	Croydon
1999	Arsenal	Southampton Saints
2000	Croydon	Doncaster Belles

Sources: WFA Cup Final programmes 1971- 1992 and FA Women's Challenge Cup Final programmes 1993-2000

One of the questions raised by this shift to the dominance of southern clubs is the relative role of the FA in administering funding, especially for independent clubs to bid for funding in their own right.

In terms of the official view, the establishment of Football in the Community in League clubs in 1985 was a turning point. The community officer's role was to co-ordinate commercial, voluntary, and public activities. Women, but more importantly girls, became categorised as part

of the football family, in a way that distinguished them from male professional football but which enabled them to consume that product. This was enhanced in 1991 when the Sports Council insisted on a closer relationship between the FA and WFA as a prerequisite for future grant aid.[22] Whether the Sports Council intended to be free of the financial cost of grant aid to the WFA, or were alarmed by the financial difficulties of the women's association since 1985 remains unclear. What is evident is that the Sports Council was determined that equality of opportunity should mean integration. Some within the women's game remain optimistic about the access to expertise that combination with the FA offers.[23] The realistic arrangement of where, how and when girls and women might participate in football in England suggests that at participation level practicalities are more important. For example in the 1990s local management of schools led to the sale of many pitches.[24]

Part of the methodology of this study involved working with a small rural club for two years to attempt to obtain local council and lottery grants. The club had been recognised by the FA for sport development and by Sport England award for volunteer development. Access to, and ownership of, land is an integral part of the bidding process. Planning permission is contingent upon lottery approval. This is given if exacting stipulations about the size, material composition, layout and structure of the building and the green areas are met. For example, a club would have to have at least a twenty-five year lease on any ground for development and have identified an additional source of income to lottery funds for at least 10% of the projected cost. The local authority could pigeonhole a sum to meet the 10%. A club may borrow from this local authority money to fund a bid (for example to pay fees for architects, planning permission and so forth) but would have to repay it if the bid were unsuccessful. Once a site has been identified, local authority planning, sports development and environmental health departments, County Council highways department and local councillors have to be persuaded of the safe benefit of the plan for the local community. In the small town of Hinckley, Leicestershire councillors were split in their views, some claiming it contravened equality of opportunity to pigeonhole money for an all-female club.[25]

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[22] Sheila Rollinson Scrapbook 1990/91; *WFA News Issue 12 February 1991* 22 June 2001 pp.2-4.
[23] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* London: Scarlet 1997 p. 71 'it is obvious that their greater resources and expertise could help the game considerably'; Kelly Simmons, The Football Association women's development officer, 'Women's Football is developing at a dramatic rate and we have many new policies and programmes' personal communication 29 June 2001.
[24] Annette MacDonald et. al. *Boys' Achievement, Progress, Motivation and Participation: Issues Raised by the Recent Literature* Berkshire: NFER 1999 p. 12 in the last ten years five thousand school playing fields have been sold.
[25] Participant observation at Hinckley Council Leisure and Planning Committee meeting 19 January 1999. The club had made it clear that, after home games had been played, other teams could hire the pitch.

On a broader scale independent women's clubs are a low priority in new FA plans. Instead, Centres of Excellence, with fifteen girls in each squad at under 16 level, are a key part. Is this likely to benefit the overall standard of women's football or is it a means of diverting money to already wealthy league clubs where the centres are located? Whatever the intention, women's clubs without equivalent facilities to Football League and Premiership grounds do not receive subsidy. Belles' plans to build a stadium are therefore vital, as without it, the club will not be granted a licence to host a Centre of Excellence. If this situation develops further the representation of independent women's clubs at elite level is likely to be reduced. The Belles' players are keenly aware of this:

> In my first year at the Club we did the treble – FA Cup, League Cup and the League. Before that we won lots of things including the League many times. We are not associated to a men's side – so I think we lose out.[26]
> Was in North Notts league, then went to Premier league. We fund ourselves – not affiliated to men's club which makes it harder for us. ZARA sponsor our kit and tracksuits, tee shirts, shorts..they send everything free. Belles have won cup and league many times...the last being the 1994 double season...haven't won anything since then.[27]
> Club founded for women 1869 (sic)...First sponsorship NPS Healthcare and Forester Health. Our major sponsor for 1998/99 season, Optima International, provided a training ground and other numerous facilities...it was a major financial input.[28]
> The Doncaster Belles were founded in 1969 on the Doncaster Rovers terraces by a group of women who sold the 'Golden Goal' tickets for Doncaster Rovers promotion. For the Doncaster Belles to maintain their high profile on and off the pitch we need to be financially secure. This security is sustained by sponsorship.[29]

The FA policy in denying funding to independent women's clubs without a certain standard of facility, when these clubs have achieved success in spite of not having these resources is, to say the least, arrogant. In the official memory of women's football there is little recognition of tradition within the sport itself that these independent teams represent. So the points made so far about the absence of the place of women's football in our urban and rural centres looks set to continue.

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[26] DB, Doncaster Belles player and England international, Doncaster 31 August 1999.
[27] GR, Doncaster Belles player and England trialist, Doncaster 31 August 1999.
[28] FH, Doncaster Belles player and Australian youth international, Doncaster 31 August 1999.
[29] CT, Doncaster Belles player, ex Arsenal player and England international, Doncaster 31 August 1999.

In attempting to confirm Bale's point about women's football as a southern-based sport, it became evident that the FA promotes southern clubs vigorously. Following Southampton's dominance in the 1970s, Doncaster Belles were *the* team of the 1980s and early 1990s before the rise of Arsenal in the late 1990s. The prominence given to London-based clubs in FA promotional material is clear in this commentary on the FA Women's Premier League (FAWPL).

> In 1995 and 1996 the winners (Arsenal and Croydon respectively) have completed a double by also taking the FAWPL title... All teams in the 3 divisions enter the FAWPL Cup. Arsenal have been the most successful participants.[30]

In relation to the WFA Cup similar eminence is given to Arsenal.

> Southampton has been the most successful side in the competition, appearing in 11 finals and winning eight of them. They hold the record winning score in a final (8-2) and are the only side to win the Cup three years in a row (in 1971, '72 & '73). The Doncaster Belles have competed in the final a record 11 times (sic), winning six, but Arsenal have the most successful recent record, winning three of the last five finals.[31]

In point of fact, Belles' record of five wins and two second places in the last fourteen finals gives a different kind of 'recent' perspective with Arsenal having a total of four wins in these years. Beyond this kind of quibbling, Doncaster's importance in the women's game is such that American and Australian internationals apply for trials. During one of my visits the daughter of a US Air Force worker had flown from her home in Germany for selection. Their reserve team is continually at the top of the newly formed Reserve League. Though there is evidently a successful club structure to develop younger players, the financial benefits given to Croydon, Arsenal and so forth are not otherwise available to independent clubs. This makes recruitment and retention consequently more difficult, with players leaving Belles in order to access coaching and funding, some transferring to Arsenal! So, having said that it is becoming an increasingly southern-based sport at elite level, the official memory overstates the importance of London clubs particularly and the role of the south generally, in women's football as a whole. The maps in appendices E-J suggest country-wide growth in areas where teams are already established as the more significant pattern.

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[30] Football Association *Women's Football Factsheet 2* London: The Football Association Ltd pp.1-2.
[31] Http://www.the-fa.org.womens 10 January 2000.

At the point of transition from a competitive to an elite level, FA policy also obviously affects those individuals who are able to join Centres of Excellence. The assumption that an individual player will and can move teams in order to play at the desired standard is the cornerstone of this approach. This is a model taken from male football where the Centre of Excellence can lead to an academy place for those able enough to be screened for a professional career. Though some young women do move because of their love of football and a desire to play at elite level, in practice, the situation depends upon the local context. At Notts County, for example, no one was rejected from the Centre of Excellence trials or training and the Centre of Excellence representative squad of fifteen drawn from a mixed ability group of girls in 2000. At Leicester City the same year, any girl who did not attend two trials on successive weeks was rejected regardless of ability. Centres of Excellence for girls are less about improving the sport as a whole and more a means of rationalising representative selection, currently the pinnacle of the female playing pyramid. If judged on output, England's failure to qualify for an expanded World Cup tournament since 1995 would suggest this policy to be of little benefit to women's football at participation or elite level. Put simply, England went from unofficial World Champions in 1985 and again in 1988 to ranking well below 16th in the world by 1998. This makes a point about using the traditional structures of male football to develop the women's game but also a point about the effect of FA control of the elite aspects of that community.

In adult women's leagues those teams with the greatest longevity have a core of individuals maintaining the club, be they players, administrators or combinations of the two. Relatively successful teams of a good standard can fold quickly if this nucleus is not present, even if they are associated with League clubs as was the case with Southampton in the 1970s. Rather than encouraging players to move clubs, perhaps if funds were diverted to local leagues and teams the players of today could become the coaches and administrators of tomorrow in order to improve the overall standard of women's football. Players hinted that public knowledge about the sport is tied up with local development:

> Better publicity of local teams. Women made more to feel football isn't just a man's sport.[32]
> Put it into schools. Make up more clubs. Show it on the TV.[33]
> More publicity for the international game and the chance to become professional.[34]

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[32] Elite questionnaire 25.
[33] Non-elite questionnaire 16.
[34] Non-elite questionnaire 18.

> More media coverage of women's football, (and on a more local level) improved social status of ladies' teams, e.g., a more family orientated day with social functions on occasions, and thirdly, a better club corporate image such as club merchandise for sale to local fans.[35]

Funding could then also address differences of opportunity to play, access to means of transport and the time to travel.

A decade on, it is difficult to share the optimism of Williams and Woodhouse writing in 1991.

> The establishment of the PFA/Football League 'Football and the Community' initiative at Football League clubs in 1985 brought with it a commitment to work with all sections of the community, including girls and women. As a consequence, coaching and playing opportunities for females increased substantially...the successful schemes involving women attracted local authority support and finance...where a commitment to equal opportunities came hand in hand with the promise of cash.[36]

A less supportive view of the financial and bureaucratic policies of the FA after 1993 could argue that while extracting the affiliation fees from women's leagues and players at recreational and competitive level, the association has belatedly begun to develop women's football at elite level. The lottery-funding framework, like Williams and Woodhouse, assumes the FA's expertise in developing the sport. This top-down cascade approach is clearly evident in the official press releases and is reinforced by FA development officers concerned with new initiatives:

> Pro-League; International Development Centre; International Developments/ Staff; Increased Centres/ Academies; Active Sports; New Girls' Football Campaign.[37]

The paradox at the heart of the system is that increased participation has been facilitated by volunteers at competitive level whose continuing unpaid contribution is vital for the growth of the sport. The current policy to fund elite and school participation by lottery monies which local authorities can bid for *because* local teams exist to provide playing opportunities for post-school and pre-elite participants, does little to consult or assist those most directly responsible for the development of women's football.

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[35] Non-elite questionnaire 28.
[36] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' in John Williams and Stephen Wagg (eds.) *British Football and Social Change: Getting into Europe* Leicester: Leicester University Press 1991 p.100.

Sitting on panels with FA representatives and local authority sports development officers was at odds with my experience of women's team sport where women, often mother to several children, would organise their family, work and social life to enable them to play football. [38] This struck me as an extraordinary effort. Lack of consultation was not an oversight but a tactic. Who should hold the control of the women's football community? One aspect of participant observation that proved to be very useful was the awareness that a very few women who played also acted as unpaid administrators. As Chair of a regional league for two years, it became clear that administrative tasks fell to eight people in the East Midlands, for example.[39] In discussing the broad acceptance of FA structures, the next section deals with women's football as a supposedly new and emerging sport.

ii. Women's Football as a Wartime Activity

The FA fact-sheet *Women's Football History* describes women's football before the 1960s as a wartime exception.

> During the First World War, women's role in society began to alter. Women's football teams began to spring up, using the games to raise money for charity. [40]

'Spring up' suggests an uncoordinated activity and the charitable intent masks the sporting contest. In support of this version of events, Lopez's explains women's interest during the First World War as follows:

> Grace Sibbert worked at the Dick, Kerr factory while her husband was fighting in France. She organised the first proper match...For no fee, on Christmas Day 1917, in front of a crowd of 10,000 they raised in excess of £600 for wounded soldiers at the Moor Park military hospital. [41]

Volunteering to play to raise money for absent loved ones links women's football to the battle on the home front. This account makes clear why the ban should have been so effective when the soldiers' return provided male professional players to displace women in much the same way that male workers were given priority in traditionally masculine industries immediately after World

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[37] Kelly Simmons, FA Head of National Football Development, personal communication 1 August 2001.
[38] Participant observation at the launch of *Active Sports Leicestershire and Rutland* 23 May 2000 and Tuesday 13 June 2000.
[39] Participant observation as Chair of East Midlands Regional League 1998-2000.
[40] The Football Association *Women's Football History Factsheet 1* London: The Football Association Ltd 1998 p.1.
[41] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p.3.

War One. It does not explain why the Football Association would have wanted to introduce a ban if women's participation was essentially frivolous, nor why the creation of a women's association should have been so problematic when others were formed at this time.

If there were a 150 clubs playing football by 1921 why wasn't an association formed to resist and overcome FA prohibition. The patronage of middle-class women was a key issue in those sports where women's associations were formed early. In cricket, eight noblewomen formed the White Heather Club in 1887 and in four years, fifty members were involved. The ECB web-site suggests reasons for the creation and maintenance of the association.

> The Women's Cricket Association was formed in 1926 by a group of enthusiasts after a cricket holiday in Malvern...England played their first game against The Rest at Leicester in 1933. The first international tour to Australia and New Zealand, took place a year later with only two players unable to afford the £80 cost.[42]

Unlike tennis, which incorporated women into administrative organisations early on, the Women's Cricket Association (WCA) only integrated with the England and Wales Cricket Board in 1998. The Executive Director, Barbara Daniels, became the national manager for Women's Cricket.[43] Like football, women's cricket has a long history including folk matches, professional touring teams, the story that a woman invented over-arm bowling to avoid her bulky skirt, even a Women's World Cup preceding the men's.[44] However, it has never reached the popularity amongst English women that football has. For example in the 1970s the number of women's football clubs grew five-fold in a decade, cricket clubs remained at fifty.[45] So having an association would not have contributed to widespread acceptance of football for women in itself.

Like football it is only very recently that rugby football has begun to market itself as a feminine-appropriate sport. The women's association is now known as Rugby Football Union for Women (RFUW), rather than the Women's Rugby Football Union (WRFU established in 1983). The union cites 1970s university teams as the mainstay of the sport for women and the creation of the RFUW in 1994 as key to the development of the game for women including a full time coach.[46]

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[42] www.ecb.co.uk: Women's Cricket 23 May 2000.
[43] www.ecb.co.uk: Women's Cricket 23 May 2000.
[44] www.ecb.co.uk: Women's Cricket 23 May 2000.
[45] John Bale *Sport and Place* p51 and p. 89.
[46] www.rfu-women.co.uk 23 May 2000.

Obviously there are some parallels with the official history women's football but again, football has always had a more extensive following outside education than within.

Rather than being a strictly war-time fashion, there has been a gradual evolution of football for women, supported in the late nineteenth century by patronage. Inverness, Scotland appears to have hosted the first recorded women's football match in 1888. This can be interpreted as distinct from folk football, like the late eighteenth century women's games, or mixed holiday activities such as Shrove Tuesday in Atherstone, though it did pit the married versus the single women. The two teams had colours, fixed goals, a fairly stable and even number of members and the game had a limited time span. The first match within Scottish FA guidelines was held at Shawfields Ground, Glasgow in 1892.[47] An association for women was founded in 1894 and a tradition began of attempting to link football with lady-like behaviour that persists today. Nettie Honeyball, the secretary of the British Ladies, organized the English North versus South game at Crouch End, London in 1895. It was followed by games in the Midlands and North; the most significant of which was the Newcastle fixture with a crowd approaching 8,000. A touring team was also successful in Scotland. Lady Florence Dixie, the President of the British Ladies' Football Club, youngest daughter of the Marquess of Queensbury and a keen advocate of women's rights, sponsored the tour. She declared:

> I am in hopes that the British Ladies Football Club will be able to furnish teams to travel about the country, and endeavor to popularize the sport by playing some matches in different localities.[48]

One possible way that women's football acquired a dubious status for the bourgeois girl is this early link with the Rights question. Dixie's touring team played games at Cappielow (Greenock Morton FC), Love Street (St Mirren FC) and Reaburn Place in Edinburgh, amongst others.[49] Though the trip attracted great publicity from the press, the coverage was not confined to the sporting contest. Though there had been some change in public opinion about the place of games for girls in public schools, women who participated in individual and group sports were likely to have their motivation discussed and criticized. Whether early women football players were politically motivated, trend conscious or tentative enthusiasts the authorities viewed their

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[47] Margot Mc Cuaig, SFA Museum 24 Septmber 2001.
[48] Sheila Begbie, personal communication 16 October 2001.

involvement as a nuisance. Resentment had become sufficiently widespread by 1902 in England for the FA to issue a ruling preventing male clubs from playing against 'lady teams'

Difference was evident from the outset and extended beyond the nomenclature of 'Ladies' to the physical appearance of the participants. The relatively large crowds would have seen a spectacle reflecting ambivalence over how to dress women players. Photographs of the time suggest that dress codes were open to interpretation. If on the one hand Rationals allowed for some freedom of movement, it can hardly have been conducive to strenuous or pleasurable play to wear

> Red blouses with white yolks, and full black knickerbockers fastened below the knee, black stockings, red berretta caps, brown leather boots and leg-pads... white gloves and... a short skirt above the knickerbockers.[50]

Playing football in a skirt or baggy breeches would as much disadvantage the working class girl who wanted a kick about in the street as the young ladies of Roedean. They could wield a hockey stick or cricket bat with relative freedom but would have had greater difficulty in receiving a ball to feet. If sport was the enemy of femininity, then the symbolic significance of playing in uniforms which risked compromising their status as ladies could only make female football challenging to public reaction.

The 1890s cycling craze had spread the popularity of bifocated garments for women as both highly fashionable but risque. Work rather than leisure revived the acceptance of trousers as practical in some circumstances when women moved into new occupations in the First World War. The spread of games was partially assisted by a change in women's costume as more teams of munitionettes opted for shorts, long socks and a jersey. The notoriety of trousers meant that not all women's teams were prepared to make this transition. Into the 1920s, some women played in skirts and stockings, under-skirts, blouses and sweaters with the only concession to a football uniform being shin-pads and boots. Unlike European players, British women covered their heads in mob caps, tam-o'-shanters or woollen hats until the mid-1920s.

Beyond that, the physical appearance of the players gives a particular identity to the individual in stylistically diverse ways that would, in itself, reward future study. There were differences within

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[49] SFA Press cuttings commentaries in *The Scottish Referee, The Scottish Sport, The Scottish Umpire* from 1895.
[50] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* reference from *The Manchester Guardian*, 1895 p. 84

teams, as well as between clubs, because individual women negotiated ideas of feminine modesty. Dress has continued to affect the image of football for women in contrast to sports where shorts began to replace skirts for female players only more recently. With the exception of covered heads and lighter footwear the uniform for women has changed very little, though it has been subject to changes in fashion such as sharing in the vogue for football clothing to be very tight for both sexes in the 1970s. Football is also fairly unusual in that most women today play in the same kit as male players, albeit, some in junior sizes. The issue of dress reflects a series of decisions about how to participate in addition to highlighting the way that broader cultural practices have connected with women's involvement as a group. For instance, girls' football in schools at the end of the nineteenth century was much less in evidence than adult women's play. One consequence is that the women's uniform was not feminized or infantilized like some games' clothing and this has yet to change.

The expansion of women's football organized by workers after 1914, sometimes on the initiative of welfare supervisors, was more pronounced in Britain than anywhere else. Teams included Aberdeen, Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Llanely, Newport, Renfrew, Rutherglen and Swansea, in addition to English munitions sides like Bennets of London and Dick, Kerr's of Lancashire.[51] In the period of the rise of work-based clubs the Secretary/Manager, such as Alfred Frankland of Dick, Kerr Ladies (later Preston), usually dealt with another Secretary/Manager to arrange fixtures, in addition to training the team, organising transport and dealing with cash. Photographs often show a female chaperone or physiotherapist who accompanied players to matches and it was comparatively rare for teams like Atalanta, from Huddersfield, to be run by and for women.

Though munitions football was the most important dimension to the women's game from 1914 to 1921 it was not the only aspect of female competition. The secretaries and teachers of Atalanta indicate that female football players were not necessarily industrial workers. Nor were they solely based in the north as the Ley's and Lyons Ladies' teams already mentioned indicate. Plymouth Ladies, a local representative team, were equally serious in their approach. Club members trained in all weather on the seafront and games drew large crowds, for instance against a Bath XI there were 12,000 spectators.

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[51] See for example The Imperial War Museum, Women's Work Collection, (IWM,WWC) MUN 24/6; MUN 24/15; 24/17.

An association for women's football, the English Ladies FA, *was* formed when twenty-five clubs met in Bradford in 1921.[52] Though Williamson has the numbers at the second meeting at sixty clubs he also suggests that the decision to prevent any club affiliated to the association from playing against non-affiliated teams was crucial in its demise in 1922.[53] Teams could not advertise for opponents in the local press. Without wealthy or middle-class patrons who understood football and with the majority of players coming, by definition, from working-class teams, women footballer players perhaps had little time to give to a football association or to fund expensive tours. For the male managers of the teams that continued to play after 1922, the network of tournament-style fixtures and matches to mark significant events continued without the need of an association.[54]

One component that lasted until the 1990s has been a large number of tournaments, rather than regional or national leagues. In the 1920s the circulation of players around the country forged an embryonic national community, with some international recognition. It was not a system that appears, at first glance, suited to those with families or to working women. Nevertheless the arrangement of fixtures in blocks allowed for social and competitive activities which players fitted in with these responsibilities. Women's games were rarely arranged for purely economic reasons. For example, the English Ladies Challenge Cup of 1922 was a creation specifically designed to foster local pride based on the pre-eminence of the home side though 26 teams took part. It was a tournament invented and administered by ex Sunderland player Arthur Bridgett and his brother Len. England international Arthur Bridgett had a reputation as a gentlemanly player who refused to play on Sunday. Len was a local employer, Director of Stoke City FC (at the time of their re-election to the Second Division of the Football League in 1915) and a local council member of 22 years. Bridgett's United, later known as Stoke Ladies, overcame Newcastle, Manchester and Grimsby sides to reach the June final at Port Vale's Cobridge stadium, beating Bentley's of Doncaster 3-1 to win.

Arthur coached the Stoke players but the team appears to have been formed because Len had seven daughters, several of whom worked in the family business. With Len's money, and Arthur's know-how, the Stoke team was well placed to ignore the FA ban from 1921-1923. As Arthur's son tells it:

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[52] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* p. 82.
[53] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* p. 85.

So Len put the money up and it was his team – Bridgett's Eleven Ladies. He had five daughters playing in the team and then they had the coal merchant's daughter who was a good strong girl cause she could carry bags of coal, so it made sense that she would be a good strong girl to play football; they were like pit ponies really. Then they had the Captain of the Titanic's niece – Smith. Lily, she was the oldest, she lived with another brother in Liverpool, where the fish was. She went up to look after it [the shop]. She was like the secretary for Len. She wasn't married. I think most of Len's daughters were involved in the fish business. I can remember the lot of them working down the Stoke fish market. Apart from that, the girls that were in the team were outsiders; the coalman's daughter, the milkman's daughter... Oh yeah, I found that I did, these strapping girls of yesteryear. That was Dolly Cooper, she was Captain of the ladies' team. You've got one there [a newspaper article] on Daisy Bates haven't you? [pointing] Daisy continued her association with football [laughs]. She married Bob Dixon, Stoke's first team goalkeeper.[55]

The various groups that helped women's matches to take place seem to have been carefully casual in their approach. Len sponsored the women's team to travel to Spain in 1923 to play against a French team and the organisation involved must have been considerable. However, when fish became more readily available from Grimsby several of Len's daughters moved there to develop the business and Arthur was offered a contract back in professional football, the team folded. Stoke's last game was played against Dick, Kerr's Ladies, billed as 'Winners of Seven Silver Cups and Two sets of Gold Medals' on 22 September 1923 at the Horsfield Ground, Colne. The club doesn't appear to have been created for any resistant, oppositional or counter-cultural expression by the brothers or the players. There was a little rational recreation associated with these games and much to do with enjoyment and entertainment.

The Stoke team were not unique: before there was a league structure, regional or otherwise, women's teams played frequently against one another for the accumulation of honours. It is only in the last thirty years that administrators have chosen to imitate the amateur or professional structures of male football. The continuity of tournament-style fixtures and cup events across the

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[54] John Bale *Sport and Place* p.3 refers to Lawson and Morford's model of commercial-consumer and participatory-recreational sports which is too rigid to describe the nature of women's football before the 1960s. Some aspects of both 'ideal types' apply in that it was both spectator-driven and organised by a fixture list, rather than a league.
[55] I am indebted to PB, son of Arthur Bridgett, for this information

country and across decades is sufficient to suggest systematic organization. For example, Bolton were formed in 1938 and Manchester Corinthians in 1949, with a second team, Dynamo Ladies, created in 1950. There is evidence from souvenir programmes of repeated competitions, year on year, between these teams. A 1951 programme has the Corinthian Ladies (acclaimed as Britain's Premier Ladies' Team) against Lancashire for the Furness Trophy at Craven Park. The Corinthians, 'modelled on the famous Corinthian style of old', were listed as having won the Southern Cup, Manchester Area Cup, Sports Magazine Cup, Roses Trophy, Midland Trophy, Cresswell Trophy, Odeon Championship Trophy, Belle Vue Trophy and the Festival of Britain Ladies' Championship Trophy. A 1952 programme for Bolton versus The Corinthians at Manchester Athletic Club, Fallowfield for the Rogers Trophy claims the home team undefeated 1938 to 1948 and winners of the Estra Henry Trophy 1946, 1947, 1948. Though we know something about the form and style of competition research has still to ascertain further details about the patrons of the various competitions, like Estra Henry. There is also a lot more to know about individual teams like the Edinburgh Dynamos of the 1950s and early 1960s who played in the trophy final on three occasions and played in England against Bolton and Manchester.[56]

Though games were often played for charity, the range of organizations for which fund-raising took place indicates that this was rarely the sole reason for competition. Part of the legitimacy of women's games played on professional grounds was based on support for the working or the fighting man. So the public recognition of players extended beyond games to include a degree of civic respect. In this way, women's football successfully cultivated an element of working-class support until the late 1960s. Many the matches took place in a ceremonial atmosphere, with welcome parties comprised of local dignitaries, teams were accompanied out on to the pitch by brass bands, it was a convention to have a celebrity 'kick off' and the games were followed by civic receptions. As examples of public recognition of female competition and sustained spectator support of women's football this arrangement demonstrates the pitfalls of projecting ideas of progress onto female play. The meanings given to the activities of women players were quite different to the lack of respect they receive today, though the sporting press may well have been less than constructive. The instrumentality of those who hosted women's teams and the free choice of supporters in opting to attend games over another activity were part of the construction of a reciprocal relationship which linked players with the wider community.

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[56] Estra Henry is believed to have been an American benefactor. The Edinburgh Dynamo team appear in programmes from 1952, 1962 and 1963 sent to me by an ex-player whose father is said to have founded the team.

In the absence of patronage and sponsorship, football for women was promoted in small collectives. The early split between administrators, entrepreneurs, managers and players, evident in the formation of the Football Association and Football League, did not take place in women's football. Nettie Honeyball was typical in that she was an enthusiast who took on the role of secretary in order to organise games. This is, in itself, partially due to the nature of women's work and leisure. Working women were unlikely to move into bureaucratic roles as separate from, or an extension to, their playing career because time was at a premium and they had to support themselves and, in some cases, home-based dependants. For example, Joan Whalley played for Dick, Kerr Ladies for almost twenty years. Her scrapbook indicates she played an average of forty-two matches a year in addition to working full time. Many of the matches involved overnight stays and social duties. Football endured when the nature of work changed, for example Joan Whalley and the formidable striker Lily Parr were among eight Dick, Kerr's players who retrained at Whittingham Hospital in order to continue supporting themselves during the inter-war years. Some remained there the rest of their working lives, though some took up alternative careers again after World War Two; Joan as a bus conductor.

Women football players and administrators acting on their behalf did not meekly accept the FA ban that crucially prevented women from playing on Association or League pitches after the collapse of the English Ladies Football Association. However, until 1969 at no point did resistance take the form of sustained collective action except for women continuing to play. However, the idea of a prohibition was contested repeatedly during its lifetime.[57] In some key respects this undoubtedly affected the presentation of women's football up to the 1970s. For example, a 1952 programme for Bolton versus The Corinthians describes the Bolton manager as 'Ever ready to put the Team on for any Charity', and the Corinthian team as having 'travelled over 9,000 miles and raised over £8,000 for Charity'.[58] Nevertheless, it is an overstatement to suggest that:

> The charitable causes and the social context of wartime Britain upon which the female game was built, and which remained its raison d'être, were by 1921 beginning to fade from the collective memory.[59]

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[57] The FA restated its position on women in 1946 and 1962, and the Football League, via County FAs, repeatedly warned against staging women's matches. Mixed matches are still banned, for example in 1994 Hayle were fined by the FA for allowing BBC Radio Cornwall to play two women in a charity match against Hayle on their home ground.
[58] Corinthian versus Bolton Programme *Manchester Athletic Ground, Fallowfield* 20 August 1952 p.2.
[59] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' p. 92.

If this were correct then constant reinforcement of the ban, such as Williams and Woodhouse refer to in the case of the Essex FA, would hardly have been necessary.[60] The 1952 example used above was played in aid of the Printers' Pension Corporation Funds. This suggests that, in the inter- and post-war periods, part of the legitimacy of women's participation was based on support for the working man, at a time when the fighting man was no longer a figure in need. Printing as a highly unionised, male-dominated occupation is a distinctive example. But, put another way, working-class men had the necessary expendable income to pay the 3d cost of a programme. Fixture secretaries presented women's football as an altruistic, harmless activity and cleverly exploited these audiences. Moreover, charity and good works were not the only feature of matches. In newspaper reports and captions for photographs individual excellence, statistical histories and honours won also featured prominently. So while Fishwick suggests that the press and public opinion of female football spectators in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s was highly critical, the descriptions of women players reflect a range of responses from unreserved admiration through reserved approbation to contempt.[61] Gail Newsham's work suggests players' recollections of public support to be overwhelming at times. Joan Whalley, for instance, described how so many supporters slapped her back in congratulation after she scored a hat-trick for Wales in 1949 that skin came off.[62]

Women's football as wartime, charitable phenomenon appears overly reductive when player testimonies suggest that there was considerable strategic planning by the managers and players to co-ordinate matches. The often referred to peak of 55,000 spectators at Goodison Park on Boxing Day 1921 aside, the lack of precise information in subsequent official histories has itself added to the perception of women's football as having merely been an enthusiasm in hostile times. This narrative fails to deal with two vital questions: why did football become so contested that the sports' governing body would want to impose a ban, and what enabled the ban to be successful in broad terms for fifty years whilst also allowing for pockets of resistance?

The relationship between the Football League and the FA and their relative rights to control the game are facets of the answer to the first question. In his study of the relationship between the Football League and the FA, Matthew Taylor describes the mutual dependence and antipathy of

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[60] John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' p. 94.
[61] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society* p.58.
[62] Gail Newsham *In a League of Their Own* p.128.

the mainly northern-based League (Proud Preston) and the southern-based Association.[63] As Taylor points out, the relationship between the League and Association was characterised by negotiation as issues arose rather than entrenched positions. The growth of the women's game in England had led not to a shambling amateurism but a tendency toward professional organisation in terms of raising large sums of money. As a parallel form of entertainment with male professionalism, women's football had established itself as a female sporting spectacle, watched by a mainly male audience whose entrance fee was donated to charity. The expanding network of the women's game in England had led, not to a shabby amateurism, but adept entrepreneurial organization in terms of raising large sums of money as the result of consistently attracting large crowds. Banning women as a group could be interpreted as a rather clumsy attempt on behalf of the Association and League to reinforce the masculine image of football. With the return of men from the front-line, following on from the uproar during the war, the administrations could not afford to alienate their prime supporters. The 1923 FA Cup Final suggested that this was a quickly and crudely effective strategy pursued until another point of crisis in the English professional game in the 1970s.

As Alethea Melling says in her explanation of the rise of women's football at this time (in comparison with hockey and athletics):

> One of the main reasons for the success of ladies' football was access to Football Association grounds, as only they could accommodate the size of crowds that these matches attracted.[64]

Having established itself as a display, the capacity to hold crowds sufficient to stage contests to guarantee the continued success in drawing live support was vital. The ruling was not a dramatic about face by the FA, which had debated the financial repercussions of continuing with women's matches for almost a year. Two months before the decision, the FA had given host clubs authority to take over the gate receipts from women's games. So the decision appears to be about the League and Association's continued attempts to recoup and defend a masculine image for football. The ban spread across Britain quickly. One Scottish newspaper, for example, reported the decision with unreserved approval.

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[63] Matthew Taylor *"Proud Preston": A History of the Football League 1900-1939* unpublished PhD thesis De Montfort University 1997 p.56 'The Chaotic Growth of the League' and pp. 97-98 'The League's Relations with the FA'.
[64] Alethea Melling *Ladies' Football* p. 25.

The action of the Football Association in passing a resolution considering the game unsuitable for females, would appear to have a good deal of support. Even among women generally, the playing of football by the sex is far from being popular... A proposal to form a football club for the women of the staff of Messrs Selfridges went before the Athletic Committee, but was rejected due to lack of support... In America girls are not allowed to play unless they have been medically tested and the gymnastic instructor is always a qualified medical man. The trouble is that the type of woman who wants to play football here won't be medically examined.[65]

The idea of improper behaviour is still pertinent to the reputation of women's football today. More players participate in less spectacular surroundings, but, women's football remains a minority activity by comparison with male football and female leisure activities generally.[66]

The reasons for this gender imbalance cannot be explained by sport alone. During the immediate post-war period, women who worked in munitions and on the land were hit by the recession.[67] One of the contributory factors in the failure to develop women's football as a mass sport was the relative change of the status of working women and a consequent change in welfare policies.[68] The defeat of the General Strike in 1926 further worsened working conditions for women and the 1931 election saw trade unionists predominate in the Parliamentary Labour Party; at least half from the Miners' Federation.[69] The dominance of the miners and other trades unions and the lack of political leverage of those occupations dominated by women, such as nursing, retrenched the position of women as leisure consumers outside the home and saw the rise of individual pastimes as a blend of domestic leisure and work.[70] As a non-school sport requiring teams of eleven to play in public for little other purpose than enjoyment, football was perhaps not best placed to become as a mass sport for women at this time. However an enduring feature of the community is

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[65] Annonymous author 'The Football Playing Women: A Most Unsuitable Game' 6 December 1921 SFA Press Cutting

[66] *Living In Britain* p. 213 figure 13E the survey indicates that, even given the loose definition of sport, other leisure activities, such as watching television and listening to music, were at least eight times as popular as football for men and at least eighty times as popular as football for women.

[67] Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars* London: Pandora 1987.

[68] MJ Daunton 'Payment and Participation: Welfare and State Formation in Britain 1900-1951' *Past and Present No. 15 Feb 1996 pp.196-212* for a more general discussion of welfare and leisure.

[69] James Hinton *Labour and Socialism: A History of the British Labour Movement 1867-1974* Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books 1983 p.14.

[70] Ross McKibbin *The Ideologies of Class, Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1990 p.164 describes hobbies as giving pleasure through privacy and solitude in working-class life that was otherwise overwhelmingly collective.

that wherever women work together football teams are likely to be created, even if they are not always work-based teams.

Another contributory factor immediately after 1921 was the reprise of a debate in *The Lancet* and in educational circles over the effects of athletics and sport on women. Sheila Fletcher cites Dr Arabella Kenealy's *Feminism and Sex Extinction* of 1920 as outlining the sterilising influences of competitive games, at the same time as the National Birth Rate Commission expressed concern over the falling trend in childbirth. The Board of Education's Chief Medical Officer endorsed physical education for girls and called for more of it at the same time that other contributors to *The Lancet* suggesting that women's health had been permanently damaged by athletics.[71] In summing up the episode Fletcher suggests:

> The 'Sexless gymnast' reached the national press, a focus of complex anxieties about the appropriate role of women, and potentially as damaging to the movement for women's physical education as the Victorian 'overstrain' argument had been to their academic training.[72]

The arguments show that the FA were not isolated in their view that strenuous sport was inappropriate for women and it was a theme in the general and specialist press. However, the FA used the furore as an excuse to prohibit women from playing, in the same way that the possible misuse of charity money by managers was used to ban women as a group rather than expel the individuals responsible. Even if the board were genuinely of the conviction that football was harmful, as Dave Russell suggests, it was still a neat justification.[73] Football as authentically male, in particular the unfeminine effects of energetic exercise, continue to influence the public image of the 'type' of women who play. Unfortunately, the cajoling and persuasive tone of the commentary in this 1950s Programme, here presented as a form of educational plea, has a contemporary relevance.

> Should ladies play football? Can they play the game? These and other questions are often asked. Today you have the opportunity to judge for yourself. Many people go to ladies' football matches out of curiosity, but we feel sure that before half time you will admit that the girls play the type of football that entertains the public; the attacking game with the ball on the ground. The girls play for the love of the game. To them football is a serious matter. They play with a full-size ball

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[71] Sheila Fletcher *Women First* pp.74-76.
[72] Sheila Fletcher *Women First* p.76.
[73] Dave Russell *Football and the English 1863-1995* Preston: Carnegie 1997 p. 97.

> on the regulation size field for the full 90 minutes. So please give them every encouragement and in return they will give you a good afternoon's sport.[74]

The idea of feminine women as not interested in football emerged as a contentious topic during this project in part because the lived experience of players is not widespread knowledge. During the process of this research certain individuals have responded in an angry or perplexed manner to ideas about women playing. As a mother of five, life-long player and local administrator put it at the time of our interview:

> It's a problem if you've got short hair and are skinny like I am because blokes assume you're a lesbian. If you've got long hair and boobs they think you can't play and are running around for attention. If you go in for tackles you're aggressive and if you stand off you're a sissy.[75]

For some men and women it appears unnatural. The current use of slogans of a feminine future and increasingly common female participation are vaguely positive attempts to make women's football appear both natural and fashionable to the general public. During the 1970s and early 1980s participation in women's football increased six-fold. Continued use of the idea of a recent and rapid growth by authorities which argued for more than half a century that football for women was an aberrant activity reflects an ongoing difficulty with the conceptualisation of players. What is not expressed in this official view of that community includes taboos such as mixed football, financial control by women, and a memory of the obstruction of women who wished to play, to name but three issues.

Players' access to transport and the ability to compete were directly linked because of the geographical spread of teams. Teams travelled by public or hired transport and sometimes took days to reach a destination in order to play football. Tracing their competition was difficult and even in the privately-held sources it is easier to determine the occupations and the various social backgrounds of the French players than the English because the writers appear to have assumed that programmes would be read by an audience keen on football and familiar with the players. For example a French team as described in a programme from a 1949 match included:

> Cecile Sorel. (Capt.) Fearless tackler and makes a splendid captain.

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[74] Corinthian versus Lancashire Ladies, 1951
[75] ME, player and local administrator, Newark Notts 29 May 1999.

Aline Dingee. A very fine college girl, plays many games and likes soccer best of all.

V Nelanney. Teacher of Physical culture in several Public Schools in France.

Anne Boutin. Excellent swimmer and runner, a Milliner by trade and wears her own hats.

Paulette Le Blond. Secretary to one of the largest Motor Firms in France, a fine all round sporting girl. Winner of several skiing Championships.

Ranle Cadi. By profession a photographer. Her speciality is Spanish Dances of which she is a teacher.

Jeanette Grainder. Recently won a French National Championship which included all Sports. She is Secretary to a well-known Congressman.

Yvonne Renald. Basketball International. She is a Clerk in the French Post Office.

Arlette Reni. A Masseuse specialising in sports massage. Represented France at Basketball.[76]

The French tours were usually annual events and, though less frequent than tournament-style fixtures amongst British teams, sufficiently significant to suggest that competition was not just local or dependent on other fund-raising or leisure activities. The dilemma of how to talk and write about female players has continued from the earliest days of women's participation to the present. These 'pen pictures' of English players taken from a Festival of Britain programme characterize this linguistic dilemma as the exclamations manage to be both highly specific and yet vague:

Muriel Jones. R.H.B. School Teacher. Coaches the boys. Always Reliable and Steady.

Flo Cloake. Age 17. (Withington). A Rock of Gibraltar. Natural left-footer and splendid header of a ball.

Alma Nixon. Age 19. (Manchester). Steady type of player. Very hard to pass, and a great student of the game. Likes to referee.

Doris Ashley. Age 27. "Skipper" is captain and schemer in chief. Always seems to be where the ball is. Odeon Lady footballer of 1950 gold medal award. Played for England and France.

> Irene Hebron. Age 18. "Legs" is an ardent Denis Compton and Arsenal fan. A fine exponent of the sliding tackle.[77]

The abstract approval of 'always', 'splendid', 'great' and 'fine' are rather middle class ways of describing female play and the closest references to athleticism are the rather immobile 'Rock of Gibralter' and 'Steady'. This diplomatic approval is a response to, but is also informed by, clichés about women and men. Football-related travel is an example of how sport brought the participants into contact with a wide range of people in a variety of social situations. The players were, by turns, local dignitaries, the object of spectator support, co-competitors, local representatives, friends, co-workers, rivals and so forth. Then, as now, sports tourism and hospitality formed an integral part of the engagement of participants.

Alethea Melling's work on French and English teams, supports the point that international competition has long been a part of women's football.[78] Teams representing the home countries played one another and Dick, Kerr's travelled to Canada and the United States in 1922. The Stoke tour to Spain in 1923 also suggests autonomy and self-sufficiency. In short, there was no need to go to Spain to play, but there was sufficient awareness of women's football as developing a European dimension that English teams wanted to extend the range of competitors that they played against. The setting of the Spanish game is likely to have been the FC Barcelona ground between 1909 and 1922, Carrer Industria. Known locally as L'Escopidora, 'the spittoon', because of its small pitch, the ground was considered the best of its time in Catalonia and the first to have artificial lighting. The possible capacity and the crowd reported in the local newspaper at the time was 6,000 spectators. The Stoke Ladies played the French Femina side, over two fixtures. Why they should play in Barcelona remains unclear, beyond the fact that the French side toured extensively in search of opposition. The fixture echoes the British form of wide-ranging competition but also contrasts with the number of home-countries teams against which British clubs could compete during this phase of popularity.

Sports tourism in women's football involved travel, friendship and competition. For some women it involved more. Alice Mills Lambert left England for the United States after the 1922 Dick,

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[76] Preston v France 23 June 1948
[77] Corinthians versus Lancashire, Craven Park 1951

Kerr's tour, where she purportedly tried to jump ship. On a return visit to Preston Guild in 1952 photographs show a 48 year old Alice, then mother of six, shaking hands and reminiscing with Alfred Frankland (the manager), aged seventy. After her death, Bill Parillo, writing for the *Providence Journal* prior to Women's World Cup 1999, wrote:

> If Mia and her friends want to call themselves pioneers they have every right. However, if you're looking for the real pioneers... included in that group was a feisty 4 foot-11 young woman named Alice Mills, who spent the greater part of her life living in Pawtucket raising a family of six daughters... Alice Mills' soccer career ended when she returned to America, got a job and began sending for her relatives – her mother, brother and sisters.[79]

Other interviewees made this link in more oblique ways, as in the following excerpt: Nancy 'canonball' Thomson initially played for Edinburgh City Girls in the 1930s before moving to England to play for Dick, Kerr's in 1939 where she took a job out of necessity which became a future career.

> Wherever we went we had the best treatment... all this was going to my head, I sent a letter to my married sister saying, 'Please send my things down, I'm not coming back'. I didn't learn immediately how distressed they were. Then came the problem, I had to work... I didn't fill a form in, I didn't have an interview and I suddenly realised it was a mental hospital... in no time at all I became interested... I was 41 when I finished playing football in 1957 and moved to Gibraltar to improve mental health care. It was a very exciting time... All this started through football don't forget.[80]

Competition was stylistically diverse and quite a contrast from the stable, bounded development of male football through hierarchies and leagues. The organization of the matches shows the quite explicit appropriation of existing aspects of the game, such as spectator supported events, and their reconstitution as a form of entertainment with a female focus. Fixture secretaries continued to cultivate large live audiences. World War Two was less of a turning point for women's football than the Great War had been because of rationing most players were also involved in war work. However, after women's football quickly regained popularity and returned to its previous form. In three years, in the late 1940s, in addition to the weekly fixtures played from Ormskirk to

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[78] Alethea Melling 'Cultural Differentiation, Shared Aspiration: The Entente Cordirale of International Ladies' Football 1920-45' *The European Sports History Review* Vol.1 1998;'Charging Amazons and Fair Invaders: The Dick Kerr's Ladies Soccer Tour of North America of 1922 – Sowing Seed' *European Sports History Review* Vol.3 Spring 2001

[79] Bill Parillo, Providence Journal 1999

[79] Nancy Thompson, Personal Communication 10 February 2002

Southport to Colwyn Bay, Joan Whalley played in three international tournaments, attended over twenty civic receptions and a memorial service.

In addition to the single tournament, the pattern of works and representative teams playing regular fixtures persisted throughout the decades. In the 1950s Corinthians, Fodens (based at a hauliers in Sandbach) and Bolton toured extensively and the Dick, Kerr works team became a representative Preston team. Scottish team nomenclature of the 1960s was more creative than most and usually combined both a works and a representative name, including the Cambuslang Hooverettes, Johnstone Red Rockets, Johnie Walker and Fife Dynamites, Holyrood Bumbees, Tayside Toppers, Aberdeen Prima Donnas and The Glasgow Gay Eleven (based at the Gay's biscuit factory). In England Fodens reached dominance in 1971 and played against new teams like Warminster and Southampton (originally the Cunard shipping company team). At non-elite level, the Raleigh bicycle factory in Nottingham played in the East Midlands League from 1972 to 1988. So there remains a considerable body of work to be done on placing women's teams. The arrangement of matches, at once a self-conscious activity, a form of leisure and a social practice throws quite a different light on the idea of creating women's football teams in response to a transitory and ad hoc situation requiring an amusing fund raising gimmick.

During the 1960s the status football altered immeasurably following the removal of the maximum wage in 1961, the abolition of the 'retain and transfer' system in 1963. Against this background of emerging professionalism participation football for women grew, crowds dwindled and the sport became less about spectacle and more about taking part. Unlike the period up until 1921, there is no way at the present time that women's football could challenge men's football as a professional elite sport in England or Europe. In contrast, the Women's USA (WUSA), the professional league in the United States has the potential to at least equal the popularity of Major League Soccer (MLS). Attempts by global and national associations to control women's access to the game now, therefore, might indicate a relative weakness in their status at a time of rapid change in employment law and financial interest from outside the sport. Women's football relies on the financial support and patronage of the FA and FIFA, who, in turn, enjoy an enhanced public image because of their apparently progressive attitude. This forms the basis for the mutual support of the development of a feminine appropriate sub-brand. In England a split system has developed as a consequence, whereby the majority of participation is still organised through the regional leagues run by and for women, but the elite representative squads are increasingly under the control of the FA.

The process has been neither steady nor constant. Instead there have been periods of intense and more diffuse of development. From the 1960s a vibrant and varied participatory form of football developed. Hughie Green was perhaps as unlikely a champion for women's football as it is possible to imagine but an 'Opportunity Knocks' contestant in 1967 challenged him to see Scots women players in action and took her at her word. The Butlins' Games, as they came to be known, had £300 prize money, attracted crowds of 5000 and were supported by *Daily Mirror* in England and the *Daily Record* in Scotland. There was one predictably salacious tabloid photograph of Joan Tench supposedly taking leave of her shorts as she jumped to head a ball but Green was not apparently promoting a powder-puff image for the sport.

> These women are terrific. We've had some tremendous games since it all started. If they don't want the kind of publicity and the big attendances and great games we've been giving all over the country I couldn't care less. Our girls have played hard; they deserve all the encouragement we can give them.[81]

The critics to whom he was responding were WFA members, particularly Arthur Hobbs, who did not approve of the matches at all and discussed banning affiliated teams who participated. Hobbs obviously felt his own Deal Tournament to be more respectable than one fronted by a showman, however affable: 'Our aim is to get women's football recognised by the English and Scottish football associations. People used to laugh at women's football. We want it to be recognised as a serious skilled part of a great game'.[82]

Homestead Ladies is a good example of the collective enthusiasm of women players in the 1960s and of the way that new clubs became established and closed again. The club is also a typical challenge for the researcher as they were formed for a relatively short time. The team originated at the local garage where several women worked as administrators. They played on Sundays on Home Ground Memorial pitch and trained under floodlights nearby. The largest crowd of supporters, 3,500, was recorded at a match against the Boston Bombshells at the Mayflower Sports Ground in 1961 but Homestead also played against teams including Gainsborough Worthies, Oldham Ladies, Corinthians and Ripley. They lost the use of the Memorial Ground site

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[81] Margaret Rae Collection, SFA Museum 23 June 2002
[82] Margaret Rae Collection, SFA Museum 23 June 2002

in 1964 and ceased to play soon after. By cross-checking with Gainsborough or Ripley team members, for instance, a more comprehensive picture could be compiled about why the team did not obtain an alternative home ground or whether players went on to play for other teams. The competitive network of women's football is a distinctive and characteristic aspect of involvement that regional leagues formalized to an extent after 1969. Some teams were one-off collections of women playing for the first time, as Homestead's 91 goals in their first 18 matches suggest. Others, like Corinthians and Ripley, had been formed for several years. This apparently fluid organization may appear somewhat haphazard compared with county-based and regionalized leagues with rules for promotion, relegation and so on. But this loose alliance of interest provided enough of a foundation for women's participation to grow without central regulation or a great deal of officialdom in the 1960s. A lot more work remains to be done on the continuity of clubs, the involvement of administrators and managers. By extension, the movement of players between clubs and the playing careers of individuals is also an area that has yet to be developed. What we can be more certain about is that the exponential growth of the sport from 1960s to 1985 set the seeds of the administrative and financial problems of the WFA as a governing body.

Directives from the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) regarding the co-ordination of women's competition in the 1970s were strongly resisted by associations in the United Kingdom. In contrast, the WFA programme for the 1971 Mitre Challenge Trophy shows how widespread interest was; teams included from Stewarton and Thistle (Scotland), EMGALS (Leicester), Wanderers (Nuneaton), Kays Ladies (Worcester), Amersham Angels and White Ribbon (London), Thanet United (Kent) and Southampton. An unofficial World Cup in Mexico in 1971, where beach volleyball could have learned a lesson or two about presenting women players in skimpy pink sports uniforms to television audiences, in particular led to some concern about the place of the feminine in football. The FA of Ireland formally adopted the Ladies FAI into its structure in 1991, the English FA and the Football Association of Wales took control of women's football in 1993 and the Irish Football Association agreed a partnership with the Women's Football Association of Ireland in 1995. The Scottish FA took over in 1998. The tentative phrasing of the agreements reflects a conspicuous lack of enthusiasm which means that, after integration, home countries women's teams have increasingly struggled in international competition. In contrast Germany and Sweden, Denmark, Norway, who welcomed women into rather more warmly into administrative organisations in 1970, 1972, 1978 respectively, are in the top-flight.

Professionalism was also a mixed blessing in the 1970s when British women players like Sue Lopez, Edna Nellis and Rose Reilly had to choose between travelling to pursue a career in football and representing their nation. Rose Reilly and Edna Nellis both had professional experience in France and Italy which led them to suggest that the Women's Scottish FA choice of manager in 1975, a poorly-qualified amateur male, was not the ideal choice. In return both received a lifetime ban which they feared would end their professional careers. Fortunately this was not the case; Rose captained the Italian team after being given citizenship and continued to live in Italy for some years. The issue of female professionalism has only recently resurfaced in England with the breakaway launch of SASI (Seven-a-side Soccer International) and the FA's own league both competing for ITV funding. The situation is complicated by resentment from Nationwide League clubs in financial difficulty after the collapse of the ITV Digital £180m deal early in 2002. At the current time, like in the 1970s, travel is the only option for the fully professional player. Though Fulham and Arsenal run semi-professional teams, the United States Collegiate system is still the best showcase for young British women players who hope to make a career out of playing, coaching and related activities. In spite of having world-class players, British women's sections within associations continue to be prone to internal sparring, particularly about how to make female football acceptable to obstinate and fusty bureaucracies. In spite of the increased regulation since the 1960s it has been difficult to conduct a systematic study of the numbers to arrive at a judgement of the social background of many players and how clubs operated in women's football at any one time.

Sheila Rollinson's is typical of women players in the 1970s because she began playing at seventeen, when she started work. She was a founder member of a club which is also, in some senses, representative. Rollinson and a work colleague formed Burton Wanderers in 1978 and became Beacon Wanderers in 1985 (sponsored by Beacon Hotel). The club was then adopted as Derby County Women's Club in 1992. In the early, three division, Midlands Women's League, Burton were mid-table of Division Three as at December 1978. By 1980 Doncaster Belles had joined the League and were mid-table of Division One. At the end of that year Doncaster won the league and continued to dominate the headlines for successive years. With respect to Wanderers, they had some success and were promoted but were less successful than the Belles, perhaps a reflecting a more participatory rather than a competitive ethos. Sheila continues to play for Derby County plus she has coached, administered and supported women's football for decades. Talking to her, aspects of continuity in women's football culture became more apparent.

Private collections of memorabilia and WFA newsletters dispute the view that the women's game had failed to establish a strong countrywide base for the sport in the 1980s. For example in the 1980 season, in addition to the regular matches of the Midlands Women's League (three divisions, 23 teams), Burton Wanderers also participated in the WFA Cup, the Midland Region Cup, the Majestic Cup, the Lloyds Cup, the Geoff Gibbs Trophy, friendly matches and tournaments. A 1982 edition of *WFA News* characteristically reports on games against Japan and Norway. In a single edition advertisements appear for competitions in West Germany, Denmark, Norway, Holland, France and Scotland; in addition to UK tournaments for international teams and tours by foreign teams who were searching for English opposition. Widespread local and national co-operative competition remains a key feature to this day with teams regularly travelling for two hours for a Sunday game and the more occasional international game. However there are signs of change from 2000 onwards: the FA Women's Football Committee intends to ally women's football more closely with the structures of men's football and introduce county-based leagues.

What is clear is that by 1985 the WFA had seriously under-forecast its bid for Grant Aid support to the Sports Council.[83] The participation of women consequently grew at an incredible rate when the bureaucracy necessary to stabilise development was not in place. Since the FA took over, this administration has improved considerably, but has been the specific responsibility of a handful of individuals. Developments since 1985 have shown a slower rate of increase of participation for adult women and a contested control by women administrators at the highest level. The most noticeable trend since 1995 has been to develop football for girls as a school-based sport. The role of educational settings in developing women's football is an example of a break with the past. It also contrasts with boys' school football as an alternative to an academic career.[84] This development theoretically creates thousands of opportunities for girls to play but may, at the same time, infantilise female play. Whether the methodology for funding women's teams will change the constituents of that community in the future to become a self-fulfilling prophecy remains to be seen. However it is not just the identity of women's football that looks open to amendment.

The place of women's football in the army is a good case of the use of the sport to enhance the public image of certain organizations and also makes a point about wider shifts in culture. From WAAF Sergeant Wilkinson, who played for Preston in the 1940s, to the captain of the newly-

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[83] Women's Football Association News *Financial State of the Association* November 1985 p.1.
[84] Nicholas Fishwick *English Football and Society* p.4.

formed Combined Services team, women working in the military who wished to play football have had to play for civilian teams until the 1990s. Given the nature of postings and the kind of work involved, this has made a consistent involvement difficult. As one interviewee put it:

> The Army bullshit affected my playing career for the best years I had; you know between seventeen and thirty when you're at your best. We could have a kick about with the blokes but those of us that wanted to play competitively had to join civilian teams and that made training difficult...you couldn't always make a game on Sunday. There was also that thing about women football players being lesbians and 'course you couldn't even have a hint of that on your record so (laughs) I grew my hair long. So did some of the others and I can't believe it now...as if there are no long-haired lesbians! But that's what you were up against...until the Army wanted to promote a more inclusive image and it was a godsend to them when Alex joined.[85]

The key game for services women's football was the British Army on the Rhine (now British Army in Germany) against Army UK side in February 1995 at Aldershot. This was the first major eleven a side match, which had been preceded by a number of six-a-side tournaments, notably at Bassingbourne. Though there were no organized women's teams at regimental level, the six-a-side tournaments demonstrated a clear interest among women, as the interviewee suggests. This led to the formation of an army representative side with an executive committee to oversee women's football and Jo Roach acting as director of coaching on finishing his commission. Acceptance of women's football by the Army FA and the armed services more widely led to the inclusion of match reports and articles in *Soldier* magazine, which has an international circulation, and in the more local Corps magazines. In turn, the services appeared to be more progressive and the decision of Alex Cotier, with six England caps, to enlist was something of a public relations coup.

Representative football has developed the profile of the sport in flourishing periods of interest followed by some decline. Regimental squads play tournaments, which also act as selection events for divisional teams from which the Army representative side is formed. However, as with civilian football associations, the enthusiasm of key individuals has varied considerably across divisions. From February 1995 to 1997, under the administrative lead of Kevin Reardon and the

management of Joe Roach, women's football in the Army became the most established of all the services. In the pre season tour of Cyprus in 1997, for example, the Army representative side played against other Army, RAF, Prison Service and civilian teams saw victory for the former in each case. The Inter Corps Challenge Cup was contested at eleven-a-side rather than the small-sided form and demonstrated an increasing number of women prepared to participate in Services football. Matches have also been organized with, for instance Civil Service teams, Prison Service clubs and civilian teams such as Julie Hemsley's Brighton and Hove Albion.

When it assumed control of the government in 1997 the Labour Government pledged to reconsider the ban on gay and lesbian service in the British Armed Forces within the next five years. In 1998 it was reported senior officers in the British Armed Forces were drawing up rules to integrate gay men and women into the Army. A European court ruling in September 1999 added weight to the case and in January 2000, the British Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon, announced that the ban on gay service in the UK armed forces was abolished. The rise of women's services football has coincided with these events and it is difficult to assess whether the stereotypes have been weakened or reinforced by the type of recognition shown to women players in the forces. Endorsing women's football as part of an active, collaborative ethos in the military has been the combined result of personal influence by individuals, markets for recruitment which include women as peace-keeping roles increase and promotion of the forces as a career and healthy lifestyle. In the decade since the Aldershot match the informal processes of women's play have been replaced by more systematic organization which appears to benefit both the participants and the sponsor. Nevertheless women's football has not been co-opted in the high-profile way that, for example, athletics has and in that sense remains more firmly rooted in civilian life.

The chapter now turns to look at increased female participation. Rather than a rise in interest sparked by the 1966 World Cup Victory of England, it is possible to see how previous explanations have relied too heavily on sport-specific rationales. As has been said, the rise of interest globally took place in other countries at approximately the same time in very different cultural and social circumstances. The reasons for women's increased participation therefore include women's paid work outside the home and the consequent identification of periods of leisure time and expendable income, women's increased access to transport, and improved travel and communications networks.

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[85] TDT Cranfield 15 May 2001

iii. For the Good of the Game? Quantifying English Female Participation in Football

Using quantifiable data to discuss sporting participation is the most recent dimension to the official memory of women's football. Sue Lopez, in an early article, described the creation of a competitive league in Southampton comprising seven teams, primarily from local industrial firms.[86] One of the research difficulties was to arrive at a judgement of exactly how many players and how many clubs operated in women's football at any one time. A systematic study of the numbers was difficult to conduct because there was no central archive. In order to test the hypothesis of a steady rise in playing numbers that has accelerated since FA control, I tried to summarise the knowledge in the public domain so far. So the 1969 figure of 44 clubs came from two secondary sources which were in agreement.[87] This was supported by oral evidence from two WFA administrators who suggested that the number of clubs should have been 49 but five clubs did not join for various reasons. At this time competitive leagues replaced the calendar of touring teams completing annual or tournament style fixtures. Lopez, using WFA minutes, suggests 'By the start of the 1970-71 season, membership was nearing 100 clubs' and Williams and Woodhouse, from unspecified sources, have the number at 182 in 1972.[88] Both agree that the participation by Chiltern Valley in the second unofficial Women's World Cup in Mexico in 1971 led to the expulsion of the whole East Midlands Ladies Alliance (of which Chiltern Valley were the champions) and therefore these are under-estimates of the unaffiliated clubs around. In 1977 the *WFA News* gave the number of clubs as 257 with over 100 youth teams.[89] Bale appears to support this approximate number with 260 in 1978.[90] Lopez then gives a figure of 300 clubs with 6,000 players in 1979.[91] Dorothy Miller has the 1987 figure as 187 clubs, a figure she obtained from WFA Secretary Linda Whitehead.[92] The *FA Factsheet* has the 1989 figures as 263 clubs with 7,000 players.[93] In 1991 and 1992, Lopez has 334 and 380 clubs respectively.[94] The 1991-2 *WFA News* development report says 'Such is the growing interest in women's soccer that by the

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[86] Sue Lopez 'An Investigation Of Reasons For Participation In Women's Football' *Bulletin of Physical Education* 15 1979 pp.39-47.
[87] The Football Association *Women's Football History Factsheet 1* p.1; Sue Lopez 'Participation In Women's Football' p.56.
[88] Sue Lopez 'Participation In Women's Football' p.60; John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse 'Women and Football in Britain' p.96.
[89] *WFA News July 1977* p.2.
[90] John Bale *Sport and Place* p.26.
[91] Sue Lopez 'Participation in women's football' p.40.
[92] Dorothy Miller *A Survey of English Women's Football Clubs* unpublished MA dissertation California State University May 1987 p. 5.
[93] Football Association *Women's Football Fact Sheet 3* p.1.
[94] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p.86.

end of this next season we could be looking at a total of 500 affiliated clubs'.[95] Table 2.2 of this section summarises the sources referred to here and the uneven growth year on year. The most significant pattern from this data is that in one decade, between 1969 and 1979, the number of clubs affiliated to the WFA increased six-fold. Compared to the FA figures now of 35,000 females in 1,500 clubs in 2000, it has taken twenty years for women's football to grow a further six times.

The number of clubs was particularly difficult to ascertain between 1979 and 1989. As this was the decade of increased popularity in the media and success in international competition, the lack of documentation was remarkable and reinforced my impression that increased participation was not matched by, let alone created by, increased bureaucratisation. Indeed this lack of central administrative control created a crisis in the sport around 1985, at the time of its greatest growth according to WFA newsletters, and as discussed earlier. This research problem provoked two lines of enquiry. The first was to ask what were the key factors in increasing women's participation in football. The second was to examine, from alternative sources, what happened in the 1980s.

In this second respect, a study by Miller in 1987 in which she surveyed 84 clubs with a view to providing quantitative data was most helpful. Her findings demonstrated a steady rise in the number of new clubs formed from 1975 to 1980, with 74% of clubs surveyed established during these years.[96]

Table 2.2 Growth of Clubs 1975 - 1984

Year	**Number of Clubs**	**Range of Players per Club**	**Mean**	**Mode**
1975	25	7-38	17.68	16
1976	36	7-30	17.19	15

[95] *WFA News 1991* Action Replay Fusion Creative Products Ltd. c1992 p.33.
[96] Dorothy Miller *A Survey of English Women's Football Clubs* p.21 from 1975 to 1980 the number of new clubs in the survey rose steadily from 6 new clubs per year in 1975 to 9 new clubs per year in 1980.

1977	44	8-40	18.54	20
1978	52	7-39	18.23	15
1979	59	7-40	17.49	18
1980	69	7-44	17.92	15
1981	75	7-54	18.36	16
1982	83	7-61	18.80	16
1983	83	6-83	19.34	15
1984	83	6-85	19.43	16

Source: Dorothy Miller *A Survey of English Women's Football Clubs* unpublished MA dissertation California State University May 1987, Table 2 Number of Team members per English Women's Football Clubs; Range, Mean, Mode. p.22

Not only did the number of clubs in her survey grow from 25 in 1975 to 83 in 1984 but the range of players in a club also changed. The smallest affiliated club had 7 players in 1975 and the largest 38, by 1984 the club with the least members had 6 registered participants and the one with the most had 85. The figures of the mean number of players show a growth from the average squad size from seventeen to twenty but the most frequent number of players was constant at sixteen. Miller concluded:

> The average number of members a club will carry has increased to accommodate the growing numbers of women who want to become involved in football... the mode shows little change...this figure can be attributed to the English attitude of everyone plays. By keeping the teams at this number of members, all players can participate, learn and enjoy their football.[97]

Particularly if one considers 1977 and 1979, the mode increases dramatically, as does the mean number of players in 1977 but not 1979. The following year, in both cases, sees the rise of the number of clubs, by eight in 1978 and 10 in 1980, and a decrease in the mean and mode to slightly below the standard pattern. From this it is possible to perceive a growth pattern whereby new players were attracted to existing squads which grew to around twenty. This appears to have triggered the creation of a new team or club in which the most frequent number of players was

[97] Dorothy Miller *English Women's Football Clubs* pp.23-24.

fifteen to allow for everyone to play. Also noticeable is the continued presence of the small clubs of six and seven competing, presumably, at five-a-side level and at tournaments.

The attempt to chart the growth in numbers by year has been possible to a limited extent. Miller's work suggested that there were definable patterns of increase in the 1980s decade. By compiling lists of clubs affiliated to the WFA in the years 1980 to 1990, including those mentioned in minutes, league fixtures, cup matches and feature articles, it was possible to arrive at figures which reflected the minimum number of clubs. The names of clubs were checked against previous years, in order to examine continuity but it was not possible to track the withdrawal of teams. The figures compiled from this source, shown in Table 2.2 as asterisked numbers to the right of the left-hand column, when compared with the other sources detailed in the previous paragraph, have two uses. One is to show a similar pattern of growth until 1985, which roughly corresponds with Miller's figure of 187 in 1987. The plateau of numbers and the subsequent drop reveal irregular developments in that the 300 clubs in 1979 was a high point, not exceeded for over a decade. Whether this reflects a dip in actual participation or inaccurate procedures for recording the number of teams, or both, remains to be established.

At a time when television was becoming interested in the sport and when England's success on an international stage was recognised in the press, the figures present a challenge of interpretation. Saturation of the game amongst the post-school age female population made no sense, as the number of clubs was so small, even in periods of rapid growth. The figures in the right-hand column also suggested a further complication, in that, though the number of clubs in 1989 is fewer, the number of players is greater. This is even more exaggerated in the 1991 figure with an increase of three thousand registered players, though only thirty-four more clubs. This was the year when the policy of the English Schools FA changed to allow girls' football. Rather than one underlying reason, it is likely that the combination of administrative competence, more clubs with reserve and junior teams, an increase in school-age participation and an established structure of regional leagues facilitated the expansion of participation in the early 1990s after the apparent decline in the mid-1980s.

Table 2.3 Number of Clubs 1969 – 1996

Year	**Number of clubs**	**Number of registered female players**
1969	44[1]	

1971	100[ii]	
1972	182[iii]	
1977	257[iv]	
1978	260[v]	
1979	300[vi]	6000
1980	250*	
1982	267*	
1984	260*	
1985	163*	
1987	187[vii]	
1988	166*	
1989	263[viii]	7000
1990	251*	
1991	334[ix]	9000
1992	380[x]	
1996	600 women 750 girls' teams[xi]	14,000 and 7,500 respectively
2000	700 women 750 girls' teams[xii]	35000

Sources: [i]The Football Association Fact Sheet 3 p.1 says 44 clubs; [ii]Sue Lopez①; [iii]John Williams and Jackie Woodhouse; [iv]Sue Lopez②; [v]John Bale [vi]Sue Lopez; Dorothy Miller; [viii]The Football Association;[ix]Sue Lopez ;[x]Women's Football Association *Newsletter* July 1992 p.4; [xi]The Football Association; [xii]Http://www.the-fa.org.womens

Beyond numbers, the sources suggested that the attitude of the WFA marked the mid-1980s as a turning point for women's football in England. The WFA had always been prepared to oust individuals and whole leagues from their association who were not acceptable to the FA but in 1984 they affiliated to the FA and appointed Tim Stearn as Chair. The Chair four years later, Richard Faulkener, was the first deputy chair of the Football Trust. At the time when participation

① Sue Lopez 'Participation in women's football' p.60.
② Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p.62.

numbers were growing and only one paid administrator was co-ordinating activities, the WFA was under pressure from FIFA and funding bodies (such as the Football Trust and the Sports Council) to amalgamate with the FA. As a central office administering local league and international competition the WFA was successful in its early achievements; as a self-serving authority it was ultimately a failure. The WFA, though conservative in their attitude to media representation and prone to in-fighting, were progressive in respects other than the success of their league administration in providing competitive opportunities for women players. For example, they sponsored two women for a full A Licence coaching award and developed junior representative sides. However this was short lived and the WFA was forced to field only a senior squad in international competition due to financial difficulties in 1980. It was not until 1997 was a junior squad was again assembled for representative competition.

There is some evidence that schools have increasingly provided opportunities for girls to play football in the 1990s:

> Of the young people who said they had taken part in extra curricular sport, football continued to be the most popular and had the greatest increase in participation from 31%... in 1994 to 35% in 1999. In 1999 53% of boys and 12% of girls who did extra curricular sport took part in football.[98]

However the relative gains are small compared with newer individual sports, such as skateboarding for both sexes, with the increase for girls six times that of football.[99] Netball is still the most frequently participated team sport for school-age females in England, with participation in lessons at least double that of football.[100] The General Household Survey gives participation in the four weeks preceding the survey as 0.8 for netball and 0.4 for football, but if we compare for the previous year then netball stands as 2.3 per 1.0 of football (including indoor and outdoor versions of the sport). The emphasis on women's manual dexterity, as opposed to skilful use of their feet in the context of sport, can be seen by the relative gains of basketball in popularity in a short space of time. The survey gives participation rates of half to two thirds of football, whilst the numbers for hockey are almost identical.[101]

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[98] Nick Rowe and Ross Champion *Young People and Sport: A National Survey 1999* Sport England 1999 p. 17.
[99] Nick Rowe and Ross Champion *Young People and Sport* p. 14 Skateboarding increased from 0 in 1994 to 28% in 1999 compared with football's increase from 13 to 18% for girls in Figure 15 *Participation on a frequent basis out of school lesson time*. Another individual sport, swimming, was the most popular at 54%.
[100] *General Household Survey* Office of National Statistics 1996 pp. 207 gives participation in the four weeks preceding as 0.8 for netball and 0.4 for football. However, if we compared the previous year netball stands as 2.3 per 1.0 of football (including indoor and outdoor versions of the sport).
[101] *General Household Survey* 0.2 for basketball in the four week period and 0.7 in the twelve month period.

In practice the transition from school-based sport to community clubs relies on the volunteers who are given least prestige and support by funding policies. Furthermore the transfer from school to adult football is fraught with difficulty, ranging from individual transport and communication issues, to financial costs, to lifestyle choices and broader economic and cultural developments. As *Living in Britain* showed in 1996 and *Social Trends* indicated in 2001 there is a debatable relationship between school and adult participation generally, for women particularly and for female football specifically. The 1996 survey found that sport participation rates for adults excluding walking had fallen from 48% in 1990 to 46% and 37% of men took less than an hour's exercise compared with 60% of women.[102] In 1996 soccer, as the fifth most popular male sport, showed the greatest disparity between the sexes at a male to female ratio of less than 10:1.[103] The 2001 study, though largely based on the 1996 figures, showed little difference for adult women, a smaller increase for female football in lessons than rounders and a male to female ratio of four to one.[104]

3. CONCLUSION

Women's football has had an unstable and uncertain existence. This instability intersects with a broader historical continuity. Whether or not it has been the working man's religion or linked to working-class community life, it has clearly mattered to many people that football, whatever the code, should be synonymous with masculinity. This myth has been perpetuated in terms of club ownership, playing and coaching personnel, and in ancillary industries like the sporting press to name but a few. The development of this 'tradition' has tended to be seen as self-evident and unproblematic. The first intention in this brief historical account was to show what was significant about women's football at the time. As the journey progressed the compilation of local and private sources suggested a more varied pattern of understanding than the elements of the official view of the women's football community provided for.

Although football authorities began to intervene in women's associations from the late 1960s, the practices upon which this built can be traced back throughout the twentieth century. The Football Association and Football League have been characterised by Tomlinson and Goldberg and Wagg

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[102] *Social Trends No 31* p.136.
[103] Li*ving In Britain* p. 209.
[104] *Social Trends No 31* p.230; *Social Trends No 32* p. 62.

as a family and a semi-democratic commercial collective.[105] The administrative structure, rules, regulations and policy imperatives however reflected quite particular social and cultural values in the late nineteenth century. Metaphors of inclusivity are therefore inappropriate. Anxiety, lack of interest and, at times, incomprehension over where to place female players is more apparent. It is within the context of this history that the football industry began to deal with women more directly during the 1990s. Until this point, it seemed that the football authorities had neither the inclination nor the infrastructure to oversee women's play. There have been benefits in that there has been an independent tradition of women's play, led by managers and administrators with knowledge, skill and commitment. One of the most significant disadvantages is that teams, regional leagues and central administrations have been, and can still be, cut back, closed down or restructured quite quickly.

Taking the evidence together enables some overview of the key phases for women's football in England. The early high points of women's participation include folk football in Caledonia and the British Ladies Football Club match in 1895. Between 1914 to 1921 spectator-supported women's football was dominant and followed by a period of less popular, more geographically widespread play until the 1960s.[106] From the 1960s changes in education, transport, work, leisure and women's position in society enabled the fractured communities of women players to form a national association but women's football became increasingly a participatory rather than a spectator sport. From 1985 to the present, basically under FA control, participation has grown but at a slower rate than in the fourth period. After 1993 the participation of girls has been a primary focus of the FA, unlike the expansion up to 1985 which was the period of maximum growth for female participants in a non-school setting.

Discussing the numerical increase of clubs or players is made more difficult because estimates are complicated by the definition of youth and girl, for instance the FA allows girls over 14 to play in adult teams but also to compete in age banded competition up to age 18. The WFA defined youth players as under 16 but, again, girls as young as 11 played in women's teams. Further entanglements arise because of current stipulations regarding small-sided soccer for under 16s that did not apply for WFA teams. This means that in today's terms 100 youth sides would be the

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[105] Alan Tomlinson 'North and South: the rivalry of the Football League and the Football association' in John Williams and Stephen Wagg (eds.) *British Football and Social Change: Getting into Europe* 1991 p. 35; Adrian Goldberg and Stephen Wagg 'It's not a knockout: English Football and Globalisation' in John Williams and Stephen Wagg (eds.) *British Football and Social Change: Getting into Europe* p.242

[106] The scrapbooks of Joan Whalley suggest crowd sizes of at least two to five thousand per match with significantly more on special occasions such as the international game referred to above.

equivalent of 200 teams. Some then, as now, were undoubtedly five-a-side or one off tournament teams so estimates are liable to error. Another separate but related issue which football as a sport and industry has also found uncomfortable is how to represent women players and in turn, how this representation will affect the identity of football. Both the organization and the depiction of women's football in the present is more influenced by the past than has so far been acknowledged. However, if community means 'A body of individuals organised into a unit with awareness of some unifying trait' or 'the people living in a particular place or region linked by common interests' then women's football does not entirely qualify on either count.[107] The homogeneity implied by the term 'women's football' suggests that leagues and clubs have a commonality which has been assumed or overstated. Further analysis could describe the extent to which groups of players develop a connected and coherent sense of themselves to each other and the outside world.

Another area for further study is women's experience of sporting tourism as the result of playing football at home and abroad. Ali Melling has already begun this work in connection with Dick, Kerr Ladies. Her article examines the beginnings of women's soccer in Britain, the attempts to introduce it to United States in 1922, and why initially the sport failed to ignite interest.[108] Gail Newsham has told the story of Dick, Kerr Ladies' trip to Canada and the US to play against men's teams direct from players' experience. She has elaborated on the way in which the captain, Lily Parr, who was from a very poor background, would sometimes be attracted to silver cutlery to keep as mementos of the numerous public receptions to which they were invited. She also gives the example of Alice Mills who is supposed to have said 'This is *my* country' and tried to leave the tour in order to remain in America.[109] What these players thought of foreign travel based on sporting competition can only be conjecture now. Since many were working class, we might guess that foreign travel would not otherwise have been an option. These tours undoubtedly influenced both the individual women and those who saw them. So the memory of the events from the point of view of the players and spectators would be a fascinating line of future enquiry. It could extend the work done here to begin to examine the kinds of community formed in association with women's football to look at the bonds, ties and links between players, fans, administrators and the local people. This next chapter asks what other aspects of broader

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[107] *Webster's Dictionary* Springfield 1969 p.460.
[108] Ali Melling 'Charging Amazons and Fair Invaders: The Dick Kerr's Ladies Soccer Tour of North America of 1922 – Sowing Seed' *European Sports History Review* Vol. 3 Spring 2001 pp. 353-374.
[109] Winnie Bourke, daughter of Alice Mills Lambert, telephone interview 23 June 2000.

social history should be considered to supplement our current understanding of the cultural and social meanings given to the sport in English culture.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHING WOMEN TO PLAY FOOTBALL

1. Introduction

In what ways can women become professionally involved in football in England?[1] The persistence of separate male and female spheres implied by football and women's football continues to be a key factor in the revival of women's football since 1960. This chapter explores the extent to which educational practices and policies based on the group intrude upon the rights of the individual woman football player. It then moves on to assess the impact of key legislation on aspects of professionalism for women. The argument begins with the confusion over the place of football for girls in schools. One consequence is that it has only very recently become a more widely accepted female sport within education.

> Well, they wouldn't let us play at school; it wasn't ladylike. But now and again we would play in the schoolyard at secondary school...Cause we had separate schoolyards, you know? Lads were in one schoolyard on one side of school. It was a mixed school but playgrounds were on separate sides, so I'd be playing 'The Big Ship Sails through the Alley Alley O' and all that stuff. So, yeah, I didn't play from about junior to secondary. We didn't really bother in the school. Perhaps me and (name) might have had a kick about now and again, but it wasn't sort of encouraged. We had to play hockey and netball.[2]

There is very little that is 'natural' about the place of football in our culture: it continues to be constructed as a 'manly' sport. Arguments that girls generally could outperform boys or that women could have a place in the Premiership appear outlandish in the current climate. As the research developed many contrasting ideas of what is spontaneous and what is constructed, what is essentially female and inherently male became clear. In the interview above, the school proposed a set of ideas about femininity negotiated by the character of the individual.

> Q Did you like hockey and netball?
> A I just didn't like the game (sic). I'd rather be kicking, rather than, you know, it felt strange handling a ball?

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[1] Fulham has the first women's professional team in England; however, at the moment, the players are classed as semi-professionals by the PFA and have been given associate rather than full membership.
[2] GN, player in 1970s and 1980s, administrator and coach, Chorley Lancashire 12 June 1999.

> Q School was probably the first time that you can remember being discouraged from playing football?
> A I wouldn't say we were discouraged but we weren't encouraged. It just wasn't on the agenda so you just accepted that, because that's how it was.[3]

For this player handling a ball felt unnatural whereas for many girls kicking is an alien skill. A second feature of this response is the stoic approach to behaviour reinforced by school as appropriate or 'ladylike'. The persistent and recurring themes to emerge in this chapter are tensions between educational practice, ideas of equality and personal freedom. What has been the place of female football in education? What is the purpose of education and coaching in football? If women are innately physically inferior why has it been necessary to prevent them from becoming professionals in male football by law?

Adult female fragility is a motif in football particularly and sport generally. The most damaging legislation remains, paradoxically, the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act because it reinforces the principle of the average man and woman. In football in England, puberty is the time at which a girl is confirmed belonging to the weaker sex. One instance of contradictory logic used to insist on a difference between male and female comes from coach education.

> Children of the same age may be up to four years apart in their physical development...Whilst boys and girls can, and do, play football with each other up to 11 years of age, this is not recommended in a competitive situation after 12 years of age. Boys develop a greater proportion of their body as bone and muscle so their bodies pack more weight than girls.[4]

However, bone structure and muscular development can be affected by heredity, nutrition, disease, hormones and function. For example bone strength also develops with use in competition and practice. This is not discussed as a variable in the following excerpt which insists on male female dualism, rather than describing strength and its development as a continuum.

> Girls experience peak height velocity (PHV) at 11.8 years of age, peak weight velocity (PWV) at 12.5 years; boys (PHV) occurs at 14.1, PWV at 14.4 years of age...After puberty, the gains made in strength, speed and endurance are greater for boys than girls.[5]

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[3] GN, player in 1970s and 1980s, administrator and coach, Chorley Lancashire 12 June 1999.
[4] The Football Association *FA Coaching Certificate Course Pack Module 6 Growing Up: Youngsters in Football* London: The Football Association Ltd. p.11.
[5] The Football Association *FA Coaching Licence Course Pack Module 8 Growing Up: Youngsters in Football* London: The Football Association Ltd. p.8.

On the one hand the same findings could be argued to support the case for mixed football until age 14.On the other, the manual does not explain how or why this is relevant for football. In contact sport it does not always follow that the best performances are by the strongest players.

Maybe the age of 12, in being the average age of menarche, leads to the common sense conclusion that early maturity in boys is linked to good performance, while for girls it is the opposite. The false adolescent peak is especially inappropriate in sports requiring endurance, like football, as the anaerobic energy system that allows for sustained periods of exertion is just beginning to develop at this time. Generalising from age categories that demonstrate four years of difference in maturity is also clearly questionable. The break between secondary and primary schooling as the point at which single sex football for boys and girls is more appropriate is, in some respects, unique to the English case. It owes something to pragmatism, in that this is a clearly defined point of transition for most pupils but in part it also relates to a perception of participatory ethos at primary level and competition at secondary school. Finally, protecting girls from the competitive play of boys at this early age is a dubious line of reasoning when the greater muscle mass developed by some males could take years to develop. One player experienced various aspects of a difference at age 15 in contrary circumstances.

A I played for The School of Excellence, which is all boys again.

Q You actually got picked for the Boys' School of Excellence?

A Yeah, I played for a season, which was good.

Q Did you ever feel the odd one out?

A Sometimes, like when you had to get changed. I used to get changed after the refs, but apart from that they made me feel at home and treated me like one of the lads – it was ok.

Q What about at school?

A They made me play netball. They put it in a way like, you can either practice football and not play any games, or you can practice netball and play games. So I had to choose netball really. I still used to train with the lads but I played netball as well.[6]

[6] SS, elite player, Liverpool Adelphi Hotel 29 July 1999.

Women's access to football is clearly a gendered issue as became evident from secondary sources such as legal, educational and training texts. One of the earliest interviews with Pontuus Kamaark, a Swedish international then playing for Leicester City, alerted me to this. He suggested that, had he played as a schoolboy in England, he would not have continued to pursue a professional career. Kamaark described the tendency of English parents to shout at young boys as culturally alien, intimidating and aggressive.

> There is more shouting and here it's more like they have to learn it the hard way, 'you stupid' and this and that. That is not the way back home. They don't get punished at home if they do this and that. I would have been scared to death if I was a kid here, being shouted at. I would have cried. I think it's very hard.[7]

American soccer leagues and clubs have, in recent years, influenced amateur football in Britain by drawing up codes of conduct for supporters and players.[8] So masculinities in amateur and junior male football is a topic in need of considerable attention. Another participant in this project explained his co-option as a team coach, 'I don't play and I have no qualifications. I just see it as being part of my role as a supportive dad'.[9] Since this police officer routinely changes shifts, plans training and leads the team at matches, male voluntary support for female sport could be further researched in wider terms in English sporting culture. The number of women involved in football necessarily means that their activity will involve men as assistants and helpers. How these co-operative relationships work and the ways in which the actors view their actions is another point in need of further attention.

Another noteworthy part of the journey into football generally was my presence as the lone female at various events. While tracing the place of education and coaching in football it was necessary to play regularly against male and female players to see how they spoke about, and acted in, football-related environments. Following an all-women coaching course held in 1998, a second all women course was arranged at the next level the following year. However, with two weeks to go it was cancelled and only two women took the next mixed course.[10] As the group of twenty-four coaches was split into two in many coaching and playing situations, only one woman was in each group. On three further coaching courses I was the only woman. As a middle-aged

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[7] Pontuus Kaamark, Swedish International and Leicester City player, Leicester 9 October 1998.
[8] Many junior leagues now have a Code of Conduct involving including players, spectators and referees for example, http://www.gcis.net/saynorth/codeconduct 24 May 2000.
[9] Graham Davids, manager Loughborough Dynamo Women, Loughborough 10 October 2000.
[10] This was typical throughout the research. For the four coaching courses I attended, four more were cancelled. Three of these were all -female.

and average club player my football was likely to confirm any prejudices that the male players might have about women players' (lack of) ability. Indeed those that were most dismissive were young ex-professionals recently out of contract, searching for non-playing roles within football. The majority of the attendees were helpful and supportive in what many admitted had been for them, until that time, an all male grouping.

Nevertheless the organisation (coaching hearing impaired and differently-abled candidates) and the variety of age, cultures and playing experience of the male participants, meant that gender difference was one of many. Men and women can train and play together, but not competitively under FA sanction. At the pinnacle of the coaching pyramid is The Advanced Licence. There are three hundred men for every woman holding this qualification. It has to be the way it is assessed that is changed to improve the numbers of women coaches at the top level. However change is unlikely at the current time, even given the rise of the male coach without professional playing experience at the highest level.

To place football in context, English equal opportunity policy making generally, and implementation specifically, remains far more conservative than in some of the countries well known for elite achievement, for example Norway. As an illustration, Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 placed restrictions on the use of public money, particularly prohibiting the 'promotion' of homosexuality.[11] This emphasis on characteristic forms of male and female behaviour influences sport in less than obvious ways. The persistent naming of many football clubs as 'ladies' teams rather than 'women's' in the year 2001 is a conscious attempt to avoid a 'butch' tag and confirm the heterosexual image of the club. As an example, of the 45 teams affiliated to the East Midlands League 1998-2000, twenty-three used the term 'Ladies', eight 'Women' and fourteen androgynous names, often in reference to the village where the team is based. Kettering Amazons Ladies and Girls FC reflects this difficulty in placing women's football as the athletic prowess of 'amazon' is modified by the genteel and nostalgic 'ladies'.[12] Hence, Section 28 is one dimension of a late twentieth century emphasis on feminine and masculine appropriate roles which affects equity in education and beyond, to sport, as a form of sex

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[11] Local Government Act 1988 (c. 9) HMSO 1988 2A 'A local authority shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality; [or] promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.'

[12] East Midlands Women's League Directory 1998 and 1999 the figure forty-five is taken before the withdrawal of some teams during both seasons.

discrimination.[13] In examining the relation of legislative controls to the women's game, two themes emerge. Firstly, the ways in which decisions made on behalf of women playing football have effects that are contrary to their interests. Secondly, there is a lack of concerted and organised resistance on behalf of women players.

2. Education Policies

As we have seen so far, this growing sport engages less than 1% of the female population.[14] The tangle of how and by what agencies girls' football in schools should be promoted has yet to be resolved. James Walvin has assessed the influence of public and state schools at the point of creation of the FA and during the codification of laws in the 1860s as the pre-eminent force in modern as opposed to folk football.

> Time and time again this public school hegemony determined the course of football in these early days... Indeed the new emphasis upon football in state schools by the turn of the century was perhaps the most important factor in guaranteeing the future of football as a mass game and was undoubtedly a determining factor in making football the national game.[15]

He therefore describes the importance of schools as more fundamental than the game itself, giving, as an example, new levels of literacy linked to mass readership of sporting news. The lack of organised school based play for girls has therefore undoubtedly been a major factor in encouraging girls *not* to play football for over a century. A more systematic inclusion of football in the physical education curriculum for females is a very recent development beset by disagreement regarding the relative role of individual teachers and institutions, the Football Association, the English Schools Football Association and sports development officers working for local authorities.

The stereotypical 'girls don't like football' has perhaps a grain of truth: why would they? For the mass of the female population, lack of interest in football is understandable as it offers little or no

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[13] See also A. Koppelman *Why Discrimination Against Lesbians and Gay Men is Sex Discrimination* New York: New York University 1994 p.69.

[14] Sports Council (England) *Sports for All* 1992 p.5 By 1990, some two-thirds of adults regularly participated in some form of sport: 29 million adults in total.' The General Household Survey includes pool, walking and darts in its definition of sport.

[15] James Walvin *The People's Game: The History of Football Revisited* 2nd Edn. Edinburgh; London: Mainstream Publishing Co 1994 p.44.

opportunity for social prestige, economic advancement or amusement at the same time that women's participation has considerable social stigma. Equal but different sport development in school and beyond not only perpetuates playing and employment inequalities for girls' football but equally importantly, for women. In order to emphasise outcome rather than opportunity, the balance between ascribed and achieved status has to change. The ritualised, symbolic nature of sport appears to disseminate and reaffirms social values. Scraton, for instance, has analysed the relationship between educational systems and girls' role as future child-bearer.[16] Control over women's bodies to the extent of supervised and moderate regimes being *de rigueur* for women for almost two centuries have also received attention.[17] There is however, considerable further work to be done regarding football expressly and contact sports generally.

McCrone explains a paradox in the development of competitive games in English women's sport as follows:

> Manliness was a completely non-feminine concept that strengthened sport's male chauvinism by condemning effeminacy in men and female participation in so-called manly games... Yet the significance of games at the public schools to the education of women was considerable, for it was their curricula, organisation and way of life that many reformers of female education sought to emulate.[18]

University colleges and the public schools for women were then agents of the rise of games for the middle classes. In attempting to mirror the boys' public schools, women educators matched some aspects of the curricula to gain acceptance and some traditional boys games such as cricket were played.[19] Nevertheless McCrone's analysis is a broad brush of developments rather than an analysis of how football came to be exempted from girls' education. Sheila Fletcher has suggested, of the women who established the early physical education colleges,

> Unlike the other women pioneers in other fields of education, who had to seek the imprint of male authority, these were free to establish their own'.[20]

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[16] Sheila Scraton *Shaping up to Womanhood: Gender and Girls Physical Education* Buckingham: Open University Press 1992.
[17] Kathleen McCrone 'Play up! Play up! And Play the Game! Sport at the Late Victorian Girls' Public Schools' in JA Mangan and Roberta Parks (eds.) *From Fair Sex to Feminism* London: Frank Cass 1987 and Jennifer Hargreaves *Sporting Females:Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport* London: Routledge 1994 .
[18] Kathleen McCrone 'Play up! Play up'! p.113.
[19] Kathleen McCrone 'Play up! Play up'! p. 115.
[20] Sheila Fletcher 'The Making and Breaking of a Female Tradition: Women's Physical Education in England 1880-1980' in JA Mangan and Roberta Parks *From Fair Sex to Feminism* p.149.

Fletcher and McCrone illustrate the historical processes whereby some women have been, and still are, concerned to establish a separatist tradition. This was followed by the integration of grammar and higher education colleges under local authority support in the 1960s and 1970s leading to a less evident female tradition. Nevertheless, as men's influence in physical education in general began to rise after World War Two, women's football was becoming more widespread. More recently, Scraton's work is particularly pertinent as she outlines the role of the teacher in reinforcing gender difference in physical education as rooted to some extent in biological narratives and to some extent in social and cultural imperatives. However, football remains a particularly contentious subject because girls are clearly physically able to execute the skills. Two interviewees in Scraton's study expressed the nature of female participation as 'un-feminine' in the sense of being defective (as play) and rather ugly (as spectacle).

> I have yet to see an elegant woman footballer. Maybe I'm just prejudiced but they look just horrible...
> I've been to a woman's football match and there's nothing sorer to my feminine eyes than a big bust and a big behind and the attracted crowd and spectators.[21]

If it was not part of the curriculum, not promoted by teachers, prohibited by the FA until 1972 and, since that time, resisted by female and male PE teachers as a formal teaching activity, schooling may have influenced women's football more by inertia than exclusion. Perhaps the interviewee who corrected my question above was quite right in making the distinction that football for girls was less discouraged than not actively encouraged in any methodical way by the key institutions, curricula or personnel in the English educational establishment.

Another crucial element of physical education in schools is that masculine and feminine behaviour have historically been elastic but durable constructs. Mangan, for example, views manliness as a confused moral concept including 'success, aggression, and ruthlessness, yet victory within rules, courtesy in triumph, and compassion for the defeated'.[22] In contrast Crosset views it as the

> primary ideological function and catalyst for the growth of early modern sport...[it] helped define male sexuality as distinct from female sexuality ... thereby making sport part of a larger ideological battle.[23]

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[21] Sheila Scraton *Shaping up to Womanhood* p. 49
[22] J.A. Mangan *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1981 p.135.
[23] Todd Crosset 'Masculinity, Sexuality and the Development of Early Modern Sport', in Michael Messner and Donald Sabo (eds.) *Sport Men and the Gender Order* Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics 1990 p.46.

Both see sport as the demonstration and presentation of maleness and thereby providing a traditional sense of masculinity. Competition by and against women would disrupt the system of play in a dilution of manful behaviour. The real taboo of mixed football from this perspective, as with mixed sport generally, is not to defend the weaker sex but to defend the ideology of a stronger sex.

The lack of provision in state education for girls in England this century, as far as football is concerned, sits alongside scattered evidence of girls playing within schools in upper class, middle class and working class educational settings.[24] An early working class girls' team was based at a Reading school where the boys' team won the English Schools FA Cup of 1905-6. The manner in which I found out about this is typical in that the information is mentioned almost as an afterthought in a newspaper article of the time.[25] Universities and schools have been far less important to women's football culture in England than the regional leagues. Taking state education first, the effect of the recent emphasis on girls' school-age football remains problematic.

Since its foundation in 1904 the English Schools Football Association (ESFA) has had as its primary objective:

> The mental, moral and physical development and improvement of schoolboys through the medium of Association Football.[26]

For seventy years the organisation was untroubled by any sense of discrimination before a misunderstanding at the association about the purpose of the Sex Discrimination Act led them to consult legal experts about the status of mixed football. The mystification about where to place girls was evident in the protracted negotiations to include females in the constitution of the charity after 1975. It took a further fifteen years to alter the constitution to include schoolgirls so that the ESFA could potentially become the blanket association for school-age football. Initially, lawyers with experience of the Law of Trust and Charities advised the association:

> You have a discretion...you are not compelled to allow girls to play in mixed competitive teams...though you are entitled to do so.[27]

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[24] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* Devon: R& D Associates 1991 p.2-3 includes examples at Brighton High School for Girls, Girton College and Rodean.
[25] I am indebted for the information on the English Schools FA to Chief Executive John Read who provided information from ESFA files 16 July 2001.
[26] CS Allat *English Schools Football Association Report of 1988 Girls Football Survey* 19 September 1988.

So while the Sex Discrimination Act stipulated that excluding girls from competitive football was not unlawful, the wording of the Charities Act meant that including females, whatever the intention, would contravene the original objectives of the association.

> We therefore do not consider that the association is in a position to vary its Rules to permit schoolgirls playing football under the aegis of the association or in mixed teams.[28]

Three main points of interest arise from the process of change to the constitution that followed this advice. The first is the contribution of a determined individual within the organisation who was intent on including girls. The General Secretary, CS Allatt, first sent around a survey including females and mixed football to schools in September 1986.[29] His motives were, it appears, partly to ascertain how much female football was played, in part a need to clarify the situation regarding sex discrimination and the association and, additionally, a response to more frequent requests by girls to take part in football.[30] Allatt then sent out a further *Girls' Football Questionnaire* in 1988 and sought to amend the wording of the objective which to include girls, which took another three years. Though expansionism is hinted at in the legal advice, the English Schools FA certainly had a more progressive approach than the FA who merely continued to uphold Section 37 of the Rules of the Association banning mixed football.[31]

The second point is that this move led to the modification of Rule 37 in 1991 to allow mixed football under age 10 anywhere and under age 11 in schools in 1991.[32] As schools have joint facilities, they were recognised as potentially the major site of development for both sexes, for single and mixed football. However the number of teams competing in the English Schools FA National Girls Competition (fully paid for by the association in terms of transport and accommodation) has shown a steady rise from 318 in 1995 to 835 in 2000.[33] The third aspect is that this capability is as yet underdeveloped, for reasons including pressure on curriculum

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[27] Goodger and Auden *Extract from an opinion expressed by Goodger and Auden* 17 March 1988.
[28] Goodger and Auden letter to English Schools FA 17 March 1988.
[29] English Schools Football Association *Curriculum Time Football Questionnaire* September 1986.
[30] CS Allatt *Analysis of questionnaire with reference to the interest shown by girls in full time education in the playing of Association Football* Stafford: English Schools Football Association19 September 1988.
[31] Goodger and Auden letter to English Schools FA for example suggests 'It does occur to me, that there must be in existence and English Schools Football Association for schoolgirls, and I wonder if they are a registered charity'.
[32] John Read Chief Executive of the English Schools FA personal communication 16 July 2001.
[33] John Read personal communication.

physical education, strain on extra curricular activities, the resistance of some teachers, students and parents to football for girls.[34]

The awareness of a gap between school-based participation and club participation has led to the inclusion of football in Active Sports, the latest round of lottery-funded sports development activity designed to bridge the two. FA influence on women's football since 1993 can be characterised by successive fatigued initiatives. Involvement in Active Sports is no exception. The Top Sport Programme was another multi-sport volunteer schedule, launched as the primary player engagement activity in 1999, and re-launched in 2000 after an annual evaluation revealed that it had not reached the target number of players. This has been replaced in 2001 by Active Sports. Taking Leicestershire as an example, obtaining lottery funds under Active Sports will finance a part time development worker for girls' football for three years in the first instance. This is the first appointment of its kind in the county and will put football on a par, belatedly, with netball, hockey and basketball.[35] At the voluntary level, players in local clubs, who have given their time for no payment to coach young girls in schools, in the hope that the girls will then join the club out of school time were unanimous in their criticism of the scheme.

> It's absolutely useless. We've done ten sessions and not one girl has joined our club. Our time is free but the money goes centrally to the council sports development...It's not working but the money's already been paid out.[36]

The complexity of translating school-age to adult participation looks likely to challenge initiatives to develop football for girls in the near future.

Another area of steady growth has been university football in England. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 show an overall increase in the number of teams from which it is reasonable to conclude an increase in the number of young women participants. However university football is not anything like as important to football for women (or men) in this country as it is in America. For example, eleven-a-side competition was not formalised until 1988.

On the eleven-a-side table, the uniform rise in the number of teams from 1988 to 1992 is followed by a dramatic increase, due to the merger of the University Athletic Union, the British University

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[34] Sheila Scraton *Shaping up to Womanhood* p.65 describes some of the problems around the theoretical and practical participation of girls in mixed football teams.
[35] Participant observation at launch of Active Sports (football) Filbert Street 13 May 2000 and 18 June 2000.
[36] Angela Henson, ES Barwell player, coach and Active Sports Co-ordinator, Hinckley Region, 30 June 2001.

Sports Federation and Brit. Colleges. Though the number of teams involved in the competition since that date has continued to increase, participation has remained at a plateau for the last three years. Likewise the five-a-side table shows a steady increase until the year of amalgamation, followed by a considerable increase. The apparent dip in numbers is due to the regionalization of competition in a preliminary round and the figure in the table is the number of teams at the Finals tournament.

In both tables Loughborough dominates, with Crewe and Alsager, Birmingham, Manchester and Reading also prominent. However university football for women is an addition to the regionalized club competition rather than fostering talent in its own right, as College football in the United States does. Because the Sunday Leagues operate at different times than the traditional Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning slots for university sport, a team like Loughborough can enter the East Midlands Women's League by arranging fixtures from mid October onwards *and* play in university competition.

Table 3.1 BUSA WOMEN'S 11-A-SIDE ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL 1988-2000

YEAR and FINAL VENUE	**NO. OF TEAMS TAKING PART**	**QUARTER-FINALISTS**	**SEMI-FINALISTS**	**WINNERS**
1988/89 Cardiff	16	Birmingham Sussex Swansea Southampton	Exeter (RU) Bradford Lancaster	Loughborough
1989/90 Bath	19	Sussex East Anglia Birmingham Lancaster	Exeter (RU) Swansea Sheffield	Loughborough
1990/91 Bath	25	Lancaster Leicester Imperial College UCNW Bangor	Loughborough (RU) Warwick Sheffield	Exeter
1991/92 Bath	27	Leicester Lancaster Birmingham Warwick	Exeter (RU) Reading Manchester	Loughborough
1992/93 Warwick	40	UCNW Bangor Hull Loughborough West London Inst.	Manchester (RU) Liverpool Bedford	Birmingham
1993/94 Stafford	78*	Aberdeen RHNBC Sheffield Birmingham	Crewe & Alsager (RU) Cambridge Brighton	Loughborough
1994/95		Aberdeen	Crewe & Alsager (RU)	Bedford

Loughborough	88	South Bank Greenwich Birmingham	Marjon Brighton	
1995/96 Warwick	87	TASC Loughborough Marjon Brighton	Birmingham (RU) Cambridge LIHE	Crewe & Als'r
1996/97 UCL	88	Heriot-Watt Birmingham Brunel UC UW Cardiff	Brighton (RU) St. Marys Liverpool JM	Crewe & Als'r
1997/98 Birmingham	99	St. Marys Chelt'ham & Gloucs Heriot-Watt Birmingham	Leeds Met. (RU) Liverpool Hope Chichester	Loughborough
1998/99 Ilkeston	98	Birmingham Liverpool Hope Brighton Royal Holl. Coll.	Marjon (RU) Oxford Loughborough	Edinburgh
1999/00 Stevenage	99	Liverpool Hope Brighton UWIC Wolverhampton	Loughborough (RU) Manchester Crewe & Alsager	Brunel UC

* increase in the number of teams due to merger of UAU/BUSF/Brit. Colleges.

Table 3.2 UAU (1980 TO 1989) AND BUSA (1990 TO 2000)
WOMEN'S 5-A-SIDE ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

YEAR and FINAL VENUE	**NO. OF TEAMS TAKING PART**	**QUARTER-FINALISTS**	**SEMI-FINALISTS**	**WINNERS**
1980 Nottingham	14	Loughborough (II) Nottingham Nottingham (II) Reading	Bath (RU) Essex Swansea	Loughborough
1981 Keele	10	Keele (II) Loughborough (II) Nottingham Nottingham (II)	Keele (RU) Bath Swansea	Loughborough
1982 Bradford	12	Bath Keele Manchester Keele (II)	Swansea (RU) Birmingham Sheffield	Loughborough
1983 Sussex	13	Aston Hull Keele Loughborough (II)	Sheffield (RU) Sheffield (II) Southampton	Loughborough
1984 Keele	13	Sheffield Southampton Surrey UCL	Salford (RU) Keele Loughborough	Lancaster
1985 Birmingham	15	Lancaster Manchester	Salford (RU) UEA	Loughborough

		Sheffield Surrey	Keele	
1986 Durham	15	Aston Birmingham Leeds Manchester	Loughboro' (II) (RU) UEA Surrey	Salford
1987 Essex	21	Bradford Bangor Manchester Sheffield (I)	Loughboro' (I) (RU) Warwick Birmingham	East Anglia
1988 Bangor	21	Loughborough (II) Exeter Manchester (I) Birmingham (I)	Bradford (I) (RU) Loughborough (I) Keele (I)	Bangor (I)
1989 Keele	23	Lancaster Loughborough (I) Sheffield (I) Warwick (I)	Bangor (I) (RU) East Anglia Keele (I)	Exeter
1990 Keele	22	UCNW Bangor Exeter (I) Lancaster (II) Warwick (I)	Keele (RU) Leicester Sheffield	Loughboro' (I)
1991 Southampton	22	Brunel (I) Exeter (I) Sheffield (I) Southampton (I)	Lancaster (I) (RU) Exeter (II) Loughborough (I)	Leicester (I)
1992 Aston	23	Lancaster (I) Leicester (I) Liverpool (I) Sheffield(I)	Manchester (I) (RU) Bangor (I) Exeter (I)	Loughboro' (I)
1993 Hull	26	Exeter (I) Marjon Sheffield (I) Sunderland (I)	Loughborough (RU) Bedford Manchester	Leeds (I)
1994 Cheltenham	32	Brighton Birmingham Exeter Kent	Marjon (RU) De Montfort (Leics) Loughborough	Manchester
1995 Cheltenham	42	Chelt'ham & Gloucs Sunderland Glasgow Reading	Bedford (RU) Northumbria Crewe & Alsager	Marjon
1996 Keele	14*	Loughborough East Anglia Lancaster Leeds Met.	Crewe & Als'r (RU) Chelt'ham & Gloucs Birmingham	Reading
1997 Keele	13*	Exeter Marjon Sunderland ‡	Liverpool (RU) Lancaster Leeds Met.	Reading
1998 Keele	12*	Marjon Newcastle Queen Margaret East Anglia	Leeds Met. (RU) Loughborough Manchester	Keele
1999 Keele	20	Coventry Loughborough	Marjon (RU) Crewe & Alsager	Manchester

		Keele Liverpool	Staffs (Stoke)	
2000 Keele	15	Portsmouth Wolverhampton Liverpool Chelt'ham & Gloucs	Manchester (RU) Reading Exeter	Crewe & Als'r

* in Finals tournament. Regional groups not tabulated.

‡ 3 groups only.

Source: Dr Colin Aldis, British University Sports Association files

However the contribution of higher education to women's football is poised to shift. Three of the current England senior squad are based in colleges in the United States.[37] Directing elite women players to the United States to develop their playing career is in part due to financial pragmatism, in so far as it places the economic burden on the American education system. Change is coming gradually. In September 2001 nineteen players joined the newly created National Player Development Centre at Loughborough from across the country and will continue playing for club sides on Sundays in addition to training at the centre during the week. The plan is to coach this squad of players to win the Women's World Cup in 2007; accordingly, all the players are under twenty-one years of age. Julie Spearink, for instance, has reversed the journey across the Atlantic; the 16-year-old goalkeeper was born and bred in California, but English parentage qualifies her to play for England. Attracting bright, exceptional female players to this kind of initiative involves persuading them that the course would benefit them beyond sport. As yet in England, viable careers in football for women are scarce. Over and above this, English female players will continue to go to the United States for some time because of the relative professionalism of the collegiate model, the less acknowledged role of university teams, plus the stipulation that those at the National Development Centre have to have played representative football. From the role of football in education the discussion moves to the ways in which education has also had a key role in the increased rationalisation and consequent increased specialisation of football.

The role of professional athlete is one of the most visible occupations of our social structure. An aim of the chapter was to begin, therefore, to uncover the process whereby individual women football players develop their concepts of sport and define their relationships to it. The following section develops another aspect of this line of enquiry by describing the features which place formal limits on women's relationship to football including the law, specialist knowledge and practices of patronage.

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[37] Rachel Brown at University of Pittsburgh, Danielle Murphy at University of Florida and Kelly Smith with the Philadelphia Charge, formerly a student at Seton Hall.

3. Bumbling along: Women's Football and English Law[38]

The most admired occupations have long been the professions; traditionally law, medicine, architecture, the sciences and academia. In the last forty years football has moved from the retain-and-transfer system to an emergent profession with the concomitant benefits of high social rank, personal fulfilment and respect. The complexity of current employment legislation in football is reflected in Michel Zen Ruffinen's appointment as FIFA General Secretary. His legal expertise was necessary, for example, because of difficult transfer negotiations to be held with the European Union, which will result in a set of conditions applied on a worldwide basis. This section begins by reviewing case law and statutes with regard to gender, education and football. The final section debates anti-sexism, with its ontological vagueness, relative to equality of opportunity and equity. A more robust and informed approach to policy formulation in equity in sport, and especially for football, is clearly overdue.

To take the most contentious point first, the premise of the physical inferiority of girls and women relative to boys and men has been used to restrict female participation in football, particularly as an occupational activity. Women's lack of access to professional League and Premiership football can be treated as an employment issue. Establishing a women's professional football league in England will be a lengthy and elaborate affair, likely to produce a less public supported sporting product, like other women-only events. The apparently progressive attitude of FIFA, the English FA and Schools FA in the last decade has done little to increase employment opportunities for women as players and coaches. In this, football follows professional sport generally and contact sport particularly. A dramatic example of the resistance to mixed professional contact sport comes from American Football. Patricia Palinkas became the first woman to play linebacker for the Orlando Panthers in the 1970 Atlantic Coast League. In her inaugural game she was deliberately and seriously injured by an opponent who felt that he was protecting his job and his masculinity.

> I tried to break her neck. I don't know what she's trying to prove. I'm out here trying to make a living and she's out here prancing around making folly with a man's game.[39]

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[38] Lord Denning *The Football Association Limited and Nottinghamshire Football Association v Miss T Bennett* unreported transcript of judgement 28 July 1978 p. 5 'It is plain as can be...that football is not within the Sex Discrimination Act...if the law should bring football within it, it would be exposing itself to absurdity. Everyone would say with Mr. Bumble 'If the law supposes that, the law is a ass – a idiot'.

[39] Paul Hoch *White Hero, Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity* London: Pluto Press 1979 p. 65.

The role of women has changed and is changing in the period of this study more quickly than the organisation of sport. What are the definitions of equality of opportunity used by the significant organisations in sport and football? Should all teams be open to males and females?

To take these questions in turn, the administrative policy excluding all women from competition with men depends upon policy decisions which are, in legal terms, overbroad in their application. This kind of overgeneralization in administrative regulations prevails in sport generally and football particularly. This is not to say that women players would inevitably achieve a place on a male semi-professional or professional team if there were to be a change in legislation or that mixed teams should be the only avenue available to women or men in sport. However the opportunity to participate at the highest competitive level should exist for male synchronised swimmers as for female footballers. Given the historical development of some sports as male-or female-appropriate in England there would inevitably be a transitional period should mixed teams become the norm. Support for female-oriented programmes for the majority, with allowance for the exceptional female to find her own level of performance by open selection would also then be crucial.

Allen Guttman makes the point that

> Sports of older girls and adult women usually reveal more about culture and social structure than the games of young children do ... [puberty is] the moment they begin in most times and places to diverge significantly from men's sports.[40]

Lending legal weight to this separation is significant both for the wider freedom of individual women and girls and for football specifically. It is mainly after marriage, and especially after the birth of a child and increasingly as the life cycle proceeds that inequality between men and women in employment and the provision of goods and services becomes more striking.[41] Consequently, it is not in the formative years so much as in the later years that inequality is taken for granted. The use of law in the United States to encourage equality of educational opportunity is worth covering briefly here since it reflects a difference of attitude both in the use of legislature to provide rights and to the relative importance of sports in girls' and women's lives.

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[40] Alan Guttman *Women's Sports: A History* Columbia University Press 1991 p. 3.
[41] http://www.eoc.org.uk/html *Girl Power Thwarted at 16* 24 May 2000.

The rapid development of athletic opportunities for women in the United States followed Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972, a federal statute which prohibits sex discrimination. Throughout the1980s however a trend of setbacks besieged the women's movement including the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment. Only more recently with the passage of the Civil Rights Restoration Act by Congress in 1988 and the settlement of entire programmatic sex equality complaints have the prospects for continued movement toward equality in athletics regained momentum.[42] Before the passage of Title IX women comprised only 5% of the total number of athletic participants in high school and 15% in college compared to 35% and 33% in 1988.[43] Though this is a more general figure than football alone, the principle of increased participation is clear, whilst also suggesting the limits of the advances (for example the comparatively greater increase in high school rather than collegiate participation). However in England the principles of anti-sexism, non-discrimination and equality of opportunity still prevail and have been given a specific meaning in the case of football.

Sport, religion and some working practices are treated as exceptional in the original 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. The significant elements of the Act for this argument are the original intent and the peculiar place given to competitive sport. The stated aim was to establish

> An Act to render unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination and discrimination on the ground of marriage, and establish a Commission with the function of working towards the elimination of such discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity between men and women generally.[44]

Alongside sport, religion and hospital accommodation were perceived to be exceptional in the original act, as was single sex club membership. Section 44 of the Act differentiates competitive from participative sport.

> Nothing in Parts II to IV shall, in relation to any sport, game or other activity of a competitive nature where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average woman puts her at a disadvantage to the average man, render unlawful any act related to the participation of a person as a competitor in events involving that activity which are confined to competitors of one sex.[45]

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[42] Against Temple University, Washington State University and the Montana High School Association for example.
[43] M Curtis and C Grant (eds.) *University of Iowa Project on Women's Intercollegiate Sport and Title IX* Iowa: University of Iowa 2000 p.5.
[44] *The Sex Discrimination Act* HMSO 12 November 1975.

This was applied expressly to women and football in the subsequent Appeal Court decision in 1978 by Lord Denning who ruled that Theresa Bennett, aged 12, was not entitled to play for her local boys' football team, even though she had been selected on merit. Denning's interpretation is characteristically foggy; 'the law would be an ass and an idiot if it tried to make girls into boys so that they could join in all-boys' games'.[46] Lord Denning upheld the appeal of the FA against a decision by Newark County Court that the Association had discriminated against the girl on the grounds of her sex.

The ruling contained two important elements for the future of women's football. The first was the point, as argued by Robert Johnson QC, that the English FA had to abide by the international rules which barred women players from male competition. Internationally, the FIFA committee responsible for formulating The Laws of the Game on a worldwide basis is still comprised today of a representative each from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and four FIFA staff. It is therefore highly likely that the regulations reflect the British attitude to women.[47] For example, a modification to the Laws of the Game in 1999 allowed an increased number of substitutions in the case of players under 16 years of age, women and veterans (over 35).[48] This is the latest in a line of amendments that suggest that women players, by definition, may not be able to compete under the rules as they stand. Furthermore, European States have argued repeatedly over the issue of mixed football and in some cases combined teams continue until late teens.[49]

The confusion in using gender as a means of differentiation can be shown in wider trans-national terms. One of the players in the victorious United States squad of the Atlanta games, outlined some of the negotiations surrounding the 1996 Olympic rules which originally stipulated that matches for women should last eighty not ninety minutes.[50] Women's squads were to be 16 players as opposed to 18 for men and the rest days between games reduced to two. After appeals the ninety minute match was introduced and the rest day reduced to one, therefore making the

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[45] *The Sex Discrimination Act* p. 12.
[46] Alan Perriman 'Girl 'not entitled to play in boys' football team' *The Times* 29 July 1978.
[47] David Williamson *Belles of the Ball* p. 17 The 1902 ban of the council of the Football Association issued a warning to its member clubs not to play against 'lady teams'.
[48] http://fifa2.com/Preface/Modifications 12 April 2000. The modifications that already existed for these three groups were any or all of the size of the field of play; size, weight and material of the ball; width between the goalposts and height of the crossbar from the ground and the duration of the periods of play.
[49] Vera Pauw *From Wishful Thinking to Development Policy* Second FIFA Women's Football Symposium Los Angeles 8 July 1999 in the Netherlands mixed football is acceptable until age 18. Pauw, as the National Women's Coach, has been influential in raising the age of mixed football in Scotland to 15.
[50] TB, US international player 1996 Olympic Games, New York 9 September 2001.

schedule more onerous for the women players than the men.[51] Rule changes are not trivial and place women at a material disadvantage if they are enforced. They are both over-inclusive in that some women may be able to participate to the same extent as men and under-inclusive in that some men may not be able to compete against women, or to manage the full form of the game.

The second element from this case derives from the Bennett council's argument that the title woman does not apply to females under the age of 12. Sir David Cairns defined woman, for the purpose of the Act, as a female of any age and the FA's appeal was therefore allowed.

> In my opinion, the expression 'average woman' does not mean a woman of the age which is the mean of all the ages of all the women in the country, nor a woman of the age which is the mean of all those who play football, nor an age which is a mean of all the ages of girls under 12. The words 'average woman' do not envisage any arithmetical average at all, but means something like 'the ordinary woman' and, in the context of sport, the ordinary woman of the sort of age and sort of physical characteristic who would be likely to engage in that sport'.[52]

Several key issues arise from this. The vagueness of 'average' is deliberate and useful for the FA case. Cloudy phrases including 'the sort of age and sort of physical characteristic... likely to engage in that sport' detach the legislation from real bodies. Consequently the Sex Discrimination Act in the case of football allows for discrimination against women because they are women. The Theresa Bennett case was not a *prima facie* case, as no sufficient evidence was provided to prove this argument. However, it has appeared to serve in the same way. In the first instance because Bennett's solicitor argued in favour of puberty as the defining moment of difference. But more so because Lord Denning established this sphere of women's experience as *de minimus non curat lex* by recording that he thought it extraordinary that a matter of such little importance should reach the Court of Appeal.[53] This effectively prevented further action in the courts for another four years and contributed to the idea of women's right to play as trivial.

Two subsequent cases from other sports did little to assist change. In 1981 the Employment Adjudication Tribunal held that Section 44 applied only to provisions regulating those who take part in sport as competitors in allowing Mrs B Petty to referee men at national level in the sport of

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[51] TB, US international player 1996 Olympic Games, New York 9 September 2001.
[52] Equal Opportunities Commission *The Football Association Limited and Nottinghamshire Football Association v Miss T Bennett* transcript of judgement 28 July 1978.
[53] Equal Opportunities Commission *Football Association v Miss T Bennett.*

Judo.[54] In 1982 a County Court judgement held that there was no defence available to a pub landlord under Section 44 of the Sex Discrimination Act, rejecting the argument that a woman's physique would place her at a disadvantage when playing snooker against men.[55] Denning's subsequent retraction of other controversial decisions made in relation to the Sex Discrimination Act and specifically the case of Bennett casts doubt on the value of this judgement.[56] Until the section is altered to make intention irrelevant then cases will continue to be treated on an individual basis. However, there is little unanimity amongst women players about how desirable transformation is, as we have seen in Chapter Three. The fear is that modification to allow mixed football will lead to girls' teams being swamped by boy players and will not leave a separate domain for women to play against women.

At the highest levels it will only be exceptional men and women, by definition not the average, who are given the chance. Though Pauw makes an intriguing point when discussing the approach of the Football Association of the Netherlands to mixed football.

> 16-18 age group:
> Boys are stronger, faster bigger and heavier than girls. Remarkable in this age group is that mixed football at lower levels becomes popular. At top level only the best female players keep on playing in the mixed team.[57]

The potential for socialising through mixed play has been under-estimated relative to competition in Britain. In answer to the question, 'Would you play mixed football?' for this study, views conflicted.

> No, the game is different. You can't mix.[58]
> A lot of women could be as good as men but are they given the chance? You could have, say, a female goalkeeper.[59]
> Yes, except women have a disadvantage as regards time to develop their game.[60]
> Unsure what the purpose of this would be, but there is no reason why not skill-wise.[61]

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[54] Equal Opportunities Commission *British Judo Associationv Mrs B Petty* transcript of judgement 16 June 1981.
[55] Equal Opportunities Commission *Mrs French v Mr and Mrs Crosby (Links Hotel)* transcript of judgement 17 May 1982.
[56] Lord Denning *Landmarks in the Law* London: Butterworths 1984 p. 55.
[57] Vera Pauw *From Wishful Thinking to Development Policy* p.3.
[58] Non-elite questionnaire 15.
[59] Elite questionnaire 10.
[60] Elite questionaire 12.
[61] Non-elite questionnaire 35.

Segregation for girls since the Theresa Bennett case has resurfaced frequently but cases have only intermittently reached the courts. Most of these involve a female player picked on merit either where there was no female team, or where the male team offered a higher level of competitive play. For example, in 1981 the Bennett case was used to prevent Jo Hughes from playing for a youth football team on the grounds of her sex.[62]

Highly relevant here is the case of *Clinton v Nagy (1974)* in the US where 12 year old Brenda Clinton wished to play American football.[63] The defence argued that exclusion of females from contact sports was 'necessary for their safety and welfare' and argued that boys are becoming faster and stronger than girls at age 12. The court rejected the argument and Clinton was successful because she did not bring the case as a class action but as an individual seeking the opportunity to play. Crucially, the defendants did not claim that she did not meet the standards other than being female. Moreover, the ruling did not require the coach to play Brenda Clinton but insisted that she not be discriminated against. This ruling has been further reinforced in the Unted States in two cases of girls wishing to play association football, *Hoover v Meiklejohn (1977)* and *Libby v South Inter-Conference Association (1990).* In the former the US District Court expressly criticised the principle of protective and beneficial legislation

> Those same laws applied to racial or ethnic minorities would readily be recognisable as invidious and impermissible... Any notion that young women are so inherently weak, delicate or physically inadequate that the State must protect them from the folly of participation in vigorous athletics is a cultural anachronism unrelated to reality.[64]

However, in each case there was no female team.

In England the Pannick report of 1983 addressed these issues and developed the view that women could participate in mixed teams *and* have single sex competition.

> To give qualified women the opportunity to participate in sport at the level appropriate from their individual skills is far from ridiculous... sex discrimination is not a private concern. The injustice to individuals and the waste of society's resources justify the intervention of the state... it should remain lawful, as a form of 'compensatory opportunity' at least for the foreseeable future, to organise or

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[62] David Pannick 'How the FA kicks girl footballers off the park' *The Guardian* 16 November 1981.
[63] Robert Berry and Glenn Wong *Law and the Business of the Sports Industries: Common Issues in Amateur and Professional Sport* London, Connecticut: Greenwood 1993 p. 292.
[64] Robert Berry and Glen Wong *Law and the Business of the Sports Industries* p. 297.

> provide separate facilities or opportunities for women from which men are excluded.[65]

A less convincing aspect of his argument is that the competitive disadvantage of women is analogous to the younger and lighter player in, for example, boxing. Whereas the older and heavier participants may not 'play down' a grade, the exceptional competitor may play up. Pannick terms this system 'affirmative action' to take account of past discrimination but also summarises prevailing reservations, 'our society may simply not yet be ready to take seriously mixed contact sports'.[66]

Most useful for this study, in terms of discussing English cultural attitudes to women and football, Pannick traces the parliamentary debates surrounding clause 39 which became section 44 of the 1975 Act as a 'football clause' to ensure that 'Leeds United can carry on' without women players.[67] The 1975 Act does not give women the right to resources and, consequently, even without Section 44 females would have no *a priori* right to a place unless ability as a player merited it.

Applied to this study, would the corollary effect of allowing girls to compete in boys' teams, lead to girls' teams being dominated by boys? There is little logic in suggesting that females would want to compete to the best of their ability if we did not suggest that boys and men would also want the same thing. It is therefore unlikely that boys would dominate female teams unless the competitive standard for girls were higher than for boys, in which case, the boys' competitive opportunities would be enhanced. Beyond competition reasons apart from physical ability, to do with economic, geographic, social and cultural factors would also have a considerable influence.[68]

It is worth pursuing the argument that because most girls would be unable to compete with boys for team positions equality of rights has not been abridged. Inherent differences mean that proper training could not bring women to compete with men. So if girls are to have a meaningful sports programme, it should be kept separate from the boys. The argument follows that mixed teams would offer tokenism for a few top female athletes rather than catering for the majority and may be used as the justification for not providing female teams at all as, theoretically, women can try

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[65] David Pannick *Sex Discrimination in Sport* Equal Opportunities Commission 1983 pp.4-5.
[66] David Pannick *Sex Discrimination in Sport* p.5.
[67] David Pannick *Sex Discrimination in Sport* p.10.
[68] Jas Bains and Sanjiev Johal *Corner Flags and Corner Shops: The Asian Football Player's Experience* London: Victor Gollancz 1998 for example.

out for the men's team. Because of historical lack of support for women and sport, female teams would be additionally be disadvantaged because they would lose their best athletes to male teams. The advantage of the dual system is that as many women as men could represent their nation. It is also a fast and effective way to rectify the current imbalance in resource allocation and spectator interest. In this rationale the exceptional participant is sacrificed for the good of the majority of women. This thesis argues that the difference in funding, resources, status and employment opportunities is so evident in women's sport and particularly in football, that the separatist argument is unlikely to foster rapid fundamental change.

If selection for football is based on a merit system it ought to be ability which gets us onto the team. Separate but equal is not clearly not equal in terms of outcome. Women may be very good players who wish to compete at the highest possible level. Furthermore separate teams are not equal because of benefits and opportunities. Fulham may have a professional women's team but the status and terms of those women is not the same as for the Fulham men. Moreover there is no suggestion that any club owes a duty to ensure that women's teams were provided with equal facilities, equality of reputation, tradition or prestige.[69]

A final point closes this section. In order to ascertain exactly what 'competitive advantage' means it would be necessary to establish the mix of skills for each position on the field and this would vary with each game. The recent audit of injury by the FA will surely not lead to the separation of male players by size nor prevent those more lightweight professional players (Juhninhio, Larssen and McCoist for example) from returning to play once injured. The assumption that men have an advantage because they are men ignores examples where the average male player is placed at a disadvantage. Further research has yet to reveal the number of incidents in Accident and Emergency units around the country regarding the nature and type of injury currently sustained as the result of football participation. A doctor employed by a professional team and a doctor employed by the women's England team have both suggested that, after broken limbs, heart attacks form the most serious threat to male participants who have not exercised for some time and then play in a strenuous game.[70] Both gave instances of men who had died following Sunday games. The 'average man' who plays football is unlikely to resemble his professional counterpart.

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[69] Gordon Taylor Head of the Professional Footballers Association personal communication 18 June 2001.
[70] Dr Charlotte Cowie Darsbury 8 March 1998; Dr Tom Kinnon Pangbourne Berkshire October 11 1999.

Two factors may, however, provide more optimism for the future of professional women players. The first is that there is a developing history of women who have earned a living from football in single-sex competition in other countries. One area for further study is the migration of women footballers in order to explore and fulfil their playing potential as a professional.[71] The attempts of the English FA to replicate this collegiate model are evaluated earlier in this chapter. However, suffice to say here that Kelly Smith, considered by some to be the most promising young English player, after completing her degree at Seton Hall University in 2000 joined the staff as a full-time assistant coach for the women's soccer programme. She is currently a star player for the Philadelphia Charge and has a national and international media profile unlike any other English player that includes hosting a monthly column for SoccerAmerica.com and her own web-site. Others are likely to follow her example. More recently, Fulham's signing of Danish and Norwegian players implies a potential for attracting talent to English clubs.

The second issue is the role of key individuals in bringing action against the authorities which demonstrates gender as a rationalising statement rather than a genuine disqualification. Players' agent, Rachel Anderson was turned away twice from The Professional Footballers Association (PFA) dinners and awarded £7,500 damages and costs of £210,000 because she was refused entry with her client.[72] At the 2000 dinner thirty women associated with football were invited but the rules were changed to bar entry to Anderson.[73]

There are opportunities for players through the present system but these are likely to be extremely limited and through the 'back door'. The establishment of a 'women's realm' in professional clubs has been adopted by the FA as the most desirable model for the development of women's football and began with the establishment by Vic Akers at Arsenal of a women's Youth Training Scheme and subsequently an Academy. Regardless of arguments about how short-lived a male player's average career is, women in the scheme at Arsenal have to divert to coaching or general sports development. Lou Waller, Rachel Yankey (now at Fulham) and others have derived some of the benefits of working with a professional male club, the former as a community coach and the latter as the face of women's soccer in Nike advertisements. However the exceptional coach and the exceptional player would have to supplement their income from other sources if they were to equal their male counterparts' earnings. The next section changes the focus of this chapter to women who may want to become professional coaches to extend the point raised with

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[71] Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor *Moving with the Ball* Oxford: Blackwell 2000.
[72] *Sunday Times* 30 April 2000 Part 2 p.5.

regard to Rachel Anderson. Regardless of an apparent emphasis on equality of opportunity, football authorities continue to construct rules, formal and informal, to prevent equity of outcome.

4. Women and Football in a Professional Era

Football coaching at the highest level exceeds the financial status of the full professions whereas at lower levels it is little more than voluntary child minding. At Academies in professional clubs the coach must hold, or be working toward, the UEFA B Part 2 qualification, which is more widely known as the Coaching Licence. The preliminary qualification is the UEFA B Part 1 Certificate and the voluntary supervisory qualification is the Junior Team Manager certificate. The Advanced Licence since 1999 is only available by referral through a tutor-assessor at the successful completion of Part 2. Previously, it was open to application. The cost has also trebled to over £3000. The FA Coaches Association (FACA) was formed in 1997. To be considered eligible for work in professional football a coach must hold a qualification at either A or B level and be a member of FACA. In relation to professions and elites more generally we can begin to detect patterns that may not be specific to football. A useful point of comparison is that the structure of medical training and practice relies on sponsorship in order to reach the next stage. This, in turn, requires the support of colleagues and mentors. Sport, football and careers within it are seen as a meritocracy. If achievement alone is the main evaluative criterion, standards objective and even-handedly applied why are women not more represented in non-playing professions? Mentoring women coaches and administrators in the form of affirmative action would therefore make the actual system of benefaction plain.

With reference to Table 3.3 below, at Advanced Licence level a few women are doing outstandingly well but not the proportion that would have been predicted on the basis of comparison with their male counterparts. The extent to which women are able to talk of new career opportunities is, by extension, extremely limited. The three case studies of full A Licence 'badges' reflect the context in which change has occurred. Old patterns of resistance to women coaches and players persist and new patterns of opposition have developed. This is not just a gender bias though. The impediments for Asian players and coaches, for example, also remain pronounced. The number of black female coaches is in single figures.

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[73] *Sunday Times* 30 April 2000 Part 2 p.5.

Merton and Barber defined the coexistence of opposing feelings when subject to the power of the specialist, pertinent to the role of the football coach generally.

> However great its legitimacy, authority is known to have a high potential for creating ambivalence among those subject to it. Authority creates a mixture of respect, love, and admiration, and of fear, hatred and sometimes, contempt.[74]

Little research has focussed on access to professional football employment for women. One approach taken in this thesis is to examine the pool of talent at each level before also identifying barriers instrumental in preventing access. As the coach mixes with other coaches for mutual support the group also provides normative guidelines for behaviour. From the examples that follow, equality in football is not to be won by fitting a few females into slots of the same repressive system. The first A Licence coach for women was appointed in the early 1980s and since that time women have by and large, assimilated. The three case studies show this tactic to be a double-edged sword. In an increasingly regulated profession, women have tended to pool in the lower ranks. More women held coaching qualifications before 1997 overall, whereas increasing numbers now hold qualifications at the Junior Team Manager level.

Table 3.3 is an indication of the pool of eligible coaches at each level. In contrast, Table 3.4 later in this chapter suggests the actual number of qualified women coaches to be much higher before 1997. Coaches with credentials under the previous regime had until June 2000 to convert to the revised system. The effect of the change has been to encourage fewer women generally to obtain a coaching qualification, to act as a disincentive to transfer to the new scheme and to make it extremely difficult for women to obtain qualifications at the highest level.

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[74] Robert K Merton and Elinor Barber, 'Sociological Ambivalence' in Robert K Merton (ed.) *Sociological Ambivalence and other essays* New York: The Free Press 1976 p.26.

Table3.3 Coaching Qualifications in England 2000

SENIOR (Advanced Licence & International Diploma)		**FULL** (Intermediate Award, Coaching Licence, Coaching Certificate, International Certificate and Licence)		**ASSOCIATE** (Junior Team Managers, Teaching Certificate, Basic, Intermediate and Diploma of Treatment of Injury)	
Male	1,105	Male	5,806	Male	2,319
Female	7	Female	194	Female	180
Total	1,112	Total	6,000	Total	2,499

Source: The Football Association Coaches Association *Membership Details* 18 April 2000

In an analysis of women entering professions Carter suggested apropos women's access to certain foundation level positions in professions:

> Though women may catch up with men rather rapidly in terms of proportionate representation on entry-level "fast-track" positions, they will find it even more difficult than men to advance out of these positions into the sphere of high-status, high-paying work. Because such work is not expanding as rapidly as the sector as a whole (or as rapidly as the supply of highly educated workers!), we expect a constant pressure of excess supply.[75]

Applied to women's football, this analysis identifies that growth at professional level will be smaller than expansion at recreation level and overall surplus has a unequal effect on female coaches. The tiny apex of 7 gives a relative proportion of one woman A Licence coach for every twenty B Licence holders, whereas the ratio for male coaches is one to five. Though the figure for the elementary level of qualification for women and the B Licence are similar, far fewer men hold the Junior Team Manager eligibility. Whatever the reason for this, women are disproportionately represented at the threshold and progression is much less marked.

Women coaches tended to integrate rather than band together. There is no alliance of women either in informal support groups or a formal union. In the case of the three Advanced Licence case studies, the success of individuals can be attributed to, in the first case, extraordinary accomplishments; in the second case, years of hard work and the third case, self-presentation. This said, all three individuals, by definition excel and self-presentation and personal application are an integral part of their careers. In examining those who do earn a majority of their income,

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[75] Carter et. al. 'Women's recent progress in the Professions or, Women get a ticket to ride after the gravy train has left the station' *Feminist Studies* 7 No.3 Fall 1981 p.480.

and spend the bulk of their working time coaching, these case studies suggest possible career paths for women. There are also new avenues as the PFA has a fast track scheme so the Fulham women will have the financial backing to undertake such courses.[76]

Consideration of women as professional and semi-professional coaches does not include the majority of volunteers who run clubs, leagues and teams but an important and pace-setting minority who are willing to undergo formal tuition and assessment. Each woman has identified herself as willing to undertake the highest qualification available and made a considerable investment in a career as a UEFA A Licence involves a minimum of three years' training for exceptional candidates. In the first two cases a change of career has been involved and so though the overall intention is to look at how some women have dealt with different stages in their work cycle, re-entry to football as a career is given special consideration.

The first woman was a professional player in the 1970s, England international and is now a Director of a Centre of Excellence and an A Licence tutor-assessor. As such she acts as a gatekeeper to the profession. She was the second woman to be awarded the Licence (the first woman Licence holder is not now active in coaching beyond her role as a PE teacher). This example mirrors the male ex-professional who wishes to maintain an active role in the sport once his playing career has finished. As the author of the most comprehensive book on the development of the women's game in recent years and an associate Lecturer of the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research at Leicester, she has an academic as well as a technical interest. Her football coaching was supplemented for over a decade by work in education. In recent years she has been recognised by, amongst others, The Sunday Times Coach of the Year Award 1999 and she received an MBE for her services to sport in 2000. As such she has achieved national standing and an international reputation.

The second case is an ex competitive player without national honours who moved into football as a career change in her mid thirties and now holds a full A Licence. After coaching part time, including under 12 boys at a professional academy, she now is a Director of a Centre of Excellence and will shortly be an Academy Director at Loughborough for girls and women. The combination of marriage and part time employment is especially interesting because of the role of the family in supporting her decisions. A key theme to emerge at interview was the need for

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[76] Gordon Taylor personal communication.

flexibility in long term planning to achieve a satisfactory combination of paid career and family life.

> I attended every course going and you get to meet people so they were used to seeing me around... I'd save up and spend holidays at Lilleshall where the nationally arranged courses used to be held.[77]

Working alongside male coaches in a male academy a professional setting during evenings and vacations was also crucial. Alternatively, having experienced various aspects of coaching before starting at a professional club enhanced her confidence considerably. The financial and time commitments of attending courses meant that her job subsidised her football career in its initial stages.

For this non-professional player the problem of communication and confidence, which can be interpreted from the much-repeated need for 'respect', appeared to be particularly acute. This is not to say that direct instances of resistance were involved but that difficulties permeated to areas unrelated to gender, yet they were aggravated by the minority status of women in a male dominated environment. The impression was given of some struggles fought in isolation because of few female colleagues. However, in coaching the under 12 boys' team the interviewee felt that at age thirteen the boys were increasingly prepared for a professional life and since this was beyond her experience she would feel it inappropriate to coach them. She did, however, feel able to coach the England under 18 squad and under 16 squad for women.

The age of these two coaches may indicate an area for further development of women sport leaders. Ward and Silverstone writing in 1980 suggested that

> Women in the United Kingdom exhibit a pattern of work which is notably different from that in other countries of the EEC. Its distinguishing feature is the high proportion of women who return to work by the time they are forty years of age, having temporarily retired to care for young families. Although this pattern is of fairly recent origin, it is likely to be sustained.[78]

In establishing the size of this phenomenon in the 1980s more than half of the women in the UK work outside the home and for those aged between 40 and 54 this proportion rises to two thirds.

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[77] JE Chesterfield 10 June 1999.
[78] R Silverstone and A Ward *Careers of Professional Women* London: Croom Helm 1980 p.9.

They suggested that this is in contrast to other EEC countries and similar to the US and can be characterised as:

> An analogous bimodal or M-shaped pattern ... a period of reduced participation in economic activity over the childbearing period is interposed between periods of higher employment activity. This has the effect of polarising the female workforce into two age groups – the young and the returners.[79]

In football specific terms, those who work in academies are often part time workers who combine that occupation with some other be it playing, community development or external to the professional club. The third case study is a recently graduated teacher of Physical Education who is being mentored under the new FA regime to take her A Licence. She is Director of an Academy but her main occupation involves teaching leisure and recreation studies at a nearby local college. Her competitive career ended when she left college. The three examples combined suggested that the length of training in itself might deter women from choosing football without adding to it by additional work experience

Other elements of the decision to continue to a higher level qualification may not be related to gender. Several male and female coaches declared a preference for smaller scale teams and an interest in the overall development of younger players. That is, to take on a group of young players and see their development through to adulthood. One women B Licence coach gave up a Centre of Excellence post to coach a small village side and several men suggested that their purpose in attending the course was to provide further assistance to their local team, not as career progression. Many of those who did not return for assessment indicated that they wanted to improve their football knowledge but were not so concerned with completing the assessment which would have made them more eligible to coach at higher level.

> To be honest I don't enjoy coaching at this level... To me the main area that's neglected are (sic) the team of kids as they grow. It's great when my son's team play another where the manager will go to his players, 'Look you can't let them beat you, their coach is a woman' because my lot will get extra stuck in.[80]

There are also coaches who have no intention of taking the qualification who are working in professional football. So long as they are registered to be 'working towards' the qualification and

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[79] R Silverstone and A Ward *Careers of Professional Women* p.10.
[80] JT, coach candidate, Pangbourne 8 May 1999.

have not taken the assessment they can continue to coach in academies in professional clubs. Therefore, the older system of personal sponsorship is still prevalent in many clubs.

The third female case study found girls at under 14 to be less serious and committed than the boys of the same age she had coached and preferred the more professional approach of the academy.[81] In this sense she was very positive about planning to ensure that she obtained the right kind of work experience. This candidate successfully secured a job in a Further Education context soon after qualifying as a PE teacher and then linked with the professional club to form the academy and able to offer vocational education and coaching expertise. This niche, within contexts that have clearly defined grading structures, can provide for future promotion in either or both settings. All three women denied ever having experienced discrimination in a football work setting and suggested it was a product of attitude of mind. They emphasised the critical aspect was to be given responsibility for a complete job in order to become familiar with all the processes. As director of an academy the women defended an area over which they had complete control to be judged by the outcome.

Coaching work in professional clubs with adults poses the most severe test because it is in this context that a woman is most alien.

> Managing players (in the male academy) requires a toughness and an ability to convince them that you know what you are talking about...I can't stand boyish looking girls and effeminate boys. I like the seriousness of the male academy rather than the silliness of some of the girls. In the professional game your session can always be improved and the players never perform 100% but perfection is what you're after.[82]

This woman's ability was helped by integration into an information network. A relationship with an FA Regional Director of Coach/Player education meant that she knew key people, where to obtain particular information and generally what was going on. Practical success is only part of the key to a successful career and football, like many occupations, relies on informal processes of selection and sponsorship. On the basis of interviews and observation of training and team selection there appeared to be little indication that women were more feeling oriented than men. The three coaches shared a professional but detached concern for the players.

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[81] JC Notts County FC 10 June 2000.
[82] JC Notts County Centre of Excellence 14 June 2000.

In examining the case studies combined it is possible to draw some conclusions before turning to look at the other tiers of coaching. Whether or not women are less likely to find suitable sponsors there are certainly relatively few females in senior positions to act as role models or to influence policy making within the profession. Women's absence from leadership positions sufficient to form a critical mass is a key aspect of development that requires attention. For men and women successful football careers are built on a combination of sponsorship, visibility and reciprocal favours. The type of team one coaches is a powerful sorting tool and tracking mechanism. In relation to this both the older women were able to indicate a turning point in their career and specific mentoring schemes to foster the right kind of experience would be valuable. Even with a high level of self-motivation all three women were relieved that things turned out so well. The first two in particular know they made choices with limited options. At A Licence level women are trusted colleagues in male dominated inner circles and groomed for leadership by powerful male sponsors. As role models, these exceptional women rarely challenge male domination directly by advancing other women or fighting for changes in social institutions. The informal system is in need of intervention to eradicate gender inequality rather than merely finding and training more women. It remains to be seen whether women coaches will form groups to attain the social power to challenge their treatment as a category.

The argument now moves on to examine the reserves of women available at B Licence, who could move to A Licence. Work on cross-national perspectives of women in elites proposes that they cluster at the bottom, are grouped in sex-role appropriate activities and there are stereotypes of women's interests.[83] Epstein and Coser argue further that intervention has kept women out of elites as they are blocked in the tracking process to the top and out of alternative opportunity structures such as informal ones. Even when they become members of elites women are consigned to specialities considered to be appropriate to women's concerns.

> The maintenance of systems, which require attention and input to keep them going, does not attract as much notice as the alteration of systems.[84]

This goes beyond sport to include, for example, the educational system where the majority of primary school teachers are women, but men hold the majority of decision-making posts.[85]

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[83] Cynthia Epstein and Rose Coser *Access to Power: Cross National Studies of Women and Elites* London: George Allen and Unwin 1981 p.6.
[84] Cynthia Epstein and Rose Coser *Access to Power* p. 12.
[85] *Social Trends* Office of National Statistics No 31 2001 p. 63 Table 3.10 Teachers in maintained schools who are women: by grade. Though 58% of Primary Head teachers were women in 1999, the figure for Secondary Heads was 28%.

Applied to football it is clear that there are a large number of potential applicants to the A Licence course. However the insular attitude of those who deliver and run the courses means that both the formal and informal processes combine to limit women's achievement.

As we've seen, despite the growing popularity of football among women, 1,105 men and 7 women hold the Advanced Coaching Licence.[86] The case of Vanessa Hardwick is crucial in showing how the current qualification system is neither meritocratic nor progressive. The PE teacher, then 32, tried to obtain the Advanced Licence to develop a career in football coaching but was failed on two occasions. In 1997 an Employment Tribunal held that she had been discriminated against.[87] The FA appealed and an Employment Appeal Tribunal ruling on 26 January 1999 agreed that the reasons for not granting the licence were not credible.[88] However, the recommendation by Equal Opportunities Commission that the Advanced Licence be granted within a month was declined by the FA, opting instead to pay an additional fine of £10,000 to the £16,000 compensation already awarded to Hardwick. She then accepted a job in the United States working with the female national team to avoid further difficulties in England.[89]

Hardwick's legal advisers discovered that eight men on the second course had passed with worse marks and five had passed with the same mark. The FA claim that they did not award licences to course participants who did not meet the required standard was obviously inaccurate. Furthermore it was found that the decision to fail the candidate at her second attempt was taken before the final assessment staff meeting. Above and beyond the actual injustice, another aspect of the appeal judgement was that the settlement of the remedy payment was made before submissions. We might reasonably expect Vanessa Hardwick's remedy payment to have been considerably more substantial given her age and the potential earnings available with the qualification. This small financial compensation reflects a pattern in which both the FA and the law perceives women's involvement in football as a leisure activity rather than an employment

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[86] Table 3.3 this chapter.

[87] The case was jointly funded by the Equal Opportunities Commission, the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers.

[88] Within the wider field of employment ideas of physical 'fitness' for certain jobs are currently under review. For example the fire service, is undergoing a examination of the militaristic trappings of the service and its employment practices after a survey in March 1998 found that of 33,597 uniformed staff and 14,483 retained staff only 513 people were from black and ethnic minorities and 436 were women. HM Fire Service Inspectorate 31 March 1998. Similarly contested is the notion of 'combat effectiveness' which the Equal Opportunities Commission estimates to limit 30% of jobs in the armed forces to male only recruitment. The recent case of Angela Sidar, a cook with the Marines has caused the European Court of Justice to review the exclusion of women from such posts. Equal Opportunities Commission 26 December 1999.

[89] *Vanessa Hardwick versus the Football Association* Equal Opportunities Commission Employment Appeal Tribunal Transcript 30 April 1999.

issue. Georgina Christoforou attempted to become an Assistant Referee in 1995 and was prevented by South East Counties Football League as there were no separate changing facilities. The settlement of £1,000 assumes that refereeing would remain a leisure interest. However Mrs Elizabeth Forsdick as the first female Class 1 referee in 1981 and the first to be appointed as an assistant referee in an FA Cup match would have become eligible to referee Football League matches had she completed her non-league training.

The achievements and limitations of the Equal Opportunities Commission in achieving rights for women are highlighted by sport. Cases in sports employment have increased enormously in recent years. These include Susan Thompson's application for membership of the Professional Pool Players organisation in 1992, Lisa Budd as the first female Master of Ceremonies and Jane Couch in obtaining a professional licence to box.[90] Also significant for administration in sport is Beverly Davis' successful case against the Rugby Football Union for election to the national executive committee in 1995. Not only does the Commission assist in bringing case actions.[91] For example, a rather more unusual use of education and football is aimed at young men at Wolverhampton Wanderers FC to give young men football facilities coupled with campaigns to improve their sexual health and counsel them on the risks of unprotected sex. The scheme, which will be launched with £250,000 funding from the Department of Health, will be aimed at young men at greatest risk from social exclusion or who have been in trouble with the police. However, given that the stated aim of the initiative is to produce unwanted teenage pregnancy in the area it may be further evidence of welfare policies aimed disproportionately at young men rather than young women.[92]

Considering that much of the work in the area is, by nature, part time and subject to a personal network of contacts then women may do well to concentrate their efforts elsewhere. The limited effectiveness of the Sex Discrimination Act and the effect of the judgements made to date with relation to women and football in themselves demonstrate limited recourse to the law. Although the Act was updated in 1988, sport was not considered at this time. Pannick concluded:

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[90] http://www.eoc.org.uk/html/publications 28 June 1999.
[91] http://www.eoc.org.uk/html/publications 28 June 1999 A 1997 study for the Commission found that at GCSE almost 10% more girls were achieving 5 or more C grades than boys, and outperformed boys in Science, Maths and Technology. These advantages were lost when girls opted for traditional female subjects at A level, in vocational training and at degree level. In vocational training women were concentrated in the caring occupations and 89% of participants were male in modern apprenticeship schemes.
[92] Equal Opportunities Commission *Valuing Women: A Report* London: Equal Opportunities Commission 28 May 2000.

> In 1976-9 (inclusive), the EOC received 322 complaints/enquiries about sex discrimination in sports and competitions. In 1980 and 1981, there were in each year 21 such complaints/enquiries about sport. In 1982, the figure dropped to 12; the number of such complaints will no doubt continue to decline, as the limited effectiveness of the Sex Discrimination Act in this area becomes increasingly well known.[93]

Moreover, organisations such as the Women's Sport Foundation in England have tacitly taken the view that individual women have each to deal with their circumstance as can be shown by their providing workshops in media relations to elite competitors.[94] This is unlike the Women's Sport Foundation in the United States which has campaigned for class action and legislative change.[95] The Equal Opportunities Commission policy of dealing direct with the company means that in the case of proven repeated discrimination, as has been the case with the FA, the subsequent follow up is a private matter and not in the public domain. In employment terms this means that recommendations made publicly may be both publicly accepted and privately rejected, as was the case with Vanessa Hardwick. New developments in European law on women's rights however, could foster an era of change.

The EU's current policy of mainstreaming represents a different conceptual base but is difficult to implement. This legal framework places considerable powers of interpretation in the hands of the courts.

> The promotion of equality must not be confused with the simple objective of balancing the statistics: it is a question of promoting long-lasting changes in parental roles, family structures, institutional practices, the organistation of work and time... it concerns men and the whole of society.[96]

In English and European law the applicator must point to a comparator who does not have the 'protected characteristic' and who has been treated differently, usually better. The choice of comparator is crucial. As Fredman puts it, this formal equality model reinforces liberal ideas of

> the primacy of the neutrality of law, the rights of the individual as individual, and the freedom of the market.[97]

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[93] David Pannick *Sex Discrimination in Sport* p.76.
[94] Women's Sport Foundation Annual Conference Brighton 9 October 1998.
[95] www.womensportfoundation.org/issues and action 25 April 2001.
[96] European Commission *Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities* European Commission Communication 1996 Section 67 p. 5 definition of mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming conflicts with more substantive concepts of equality, which emphasise equality of outcomes or results. The same emphasis on critical mass has been used in, for example, the Olympic Movement to introduce quota systems. In contrast Dr Anita White, formerly of the Sports Council for the United Kingdom, suggests that quota systems should be sports-specific and set by governing bodies.[98] However mainstreaming has helped to hone new definitions of discrimination, described now as a distinction, which imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantages on an individual or group not imposed upon others.[99] Applied to women's football in England, positive action and positive discrimination are vital because of the limited idea of equity that has informed the development of the sport to date. Not only are appointments demonstrably based on patronage but also the few women afforded senior positions are supporting the system that excludes the many.

The FA, the Women's Sports Foundation and the National Coaching Foundation introduced a combined elite female mentoring programme in 2001. The irony that Hope Powell, who was appointed without a senior coaching qualification, should launch an initiative to increase the number of qualified women coaches appears to be lost on these partners.

> The FA are committed to providing opportunities for our top female coaches to develop as coaches at a pace and to a level which best suits their individual needs. The FA are delighted to be involved in this programme with key partners which will enable those coaches, under the guidance of Hope Powell (National Coach Women's Football), to benefit from the expertise and knowledge of specialists in this field. In the long term, the FA sees this scheme as on integral part of their coach mentoring programme for those women who will coach at the highest level of the women's game.[100]

In football terms, the EU article 2(4) of Directive 76/207 is particularly apposite. The Directive is intended to be applied 'without prejudice to measures which promote *equal opportunity* for men and women, in particular by removing existing inequalities which affect women's opportunities'. However Kalanke questioned the Bremen law on positive discrimination which, in the case of a tie break situation, gave priority to an equally qualified woman over a man if women were under-represented. The Kalanke case ruled that if the woman has the same qualifications she *de facto* had equality of opportunity and so equality of result exceeds the scope of article 2(4).[101]

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[97] Sandra Fredman *Women and the Law* Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997 p.383.
[98] Anita White comments made from the floor at the *2nd Olympic Conference on Women* Paris March 6 2000.
[99] Sandra Fredman *Women and the Law* p. 385.
[100] Hope Powell, England Women's National Coach, Soho Square London 23 January 2001.
[101] Janice Richards and Ralph Sandland *Feminist Perspectives on Law and Theory* London: Cavendish 2000 p. 52.

This ruling privileged the individual's right not to be discriminated against on grounds of sex over the rights of the disadvantaged group. In sum, if we take this as competition we can see that we either worsen the situation of those more favoured or improve the situation of those less well favoured. However, in the case of Vanessa Hardwick, improving her situation would not have worsened the situation of the other candidates that would have passed (even though eight perhaps ought not to have passed). As the law stands, a woman should have an equal right to compete for positions, not the right to obtain them. The Hardwick case reveals the limits of legislation, because it was only because her legal team was able to obtain information regarding the scores of the male participants that comparators could be offered and her case proven. Therefore, both legal changes and ongoing, widespread mentoring arrangements are necessary to improve women's place as coaches in football.

Referring to the table 3.3 above, whilst 0.6% of the total of Advanced Licence coaches are women, 3% of Full UEFA B equivalent coaches are women and 8% of Associate qualifications are women. In deciding upon the pool available from Associate to Full it is important to recognise that specialisation of function is a factor. The figure may be enlarged because there are five qualifications, including auxiliary qualifications in the third category of coaches such as for the treatment of injury, and so it is my intention to concentrate on the second level.

Before 1997 the qualification structure was dominated by the Preliminary Licence award. A survey completed by the FA by county is summarized in 3.4. After 1997 the Coaching Certificate could be updated to UEFA B Part One until June 2000.

Table 3.4 FEMALE PRELIMINARY AWARD COACHES BY COUNTY

County Football Associations	1994	1995	1996(-Aug)	Total
North				**132**
Liverpool	15	10	1	26
West Riding	3	5	6	14
Lancashire	6	7	5	18
Manchester	2	3	2	7
Northumberland	3	1	1	5
North Riding	7	2	5	14
Sheffield/ Hallamshire	6	10	4	20
Durham	0	1	6	7
East Riding	2	1	0	3
Cheshire	11	0	6	17

Cumberland	1	0	0	1
Midlands				**112**
Leicestershire	7	7	1	15
Bedfordshire	1	1	2	4
Cambridgeshire	3	2	0	5
Nottinghamshire	3	2	2	7
Staffordshire	4	1	2	7
Northamptonshire	2	4	1	7
Birmingham	16	3	22	41
Shropshire	2	1	1	4
Huntingdonshire	0	2	0	2
Derbyshire	5	2	2	9
Norfolk	5	0	2	7
Lincolnshire	1	0	1	2
Worcestershire	0	0	2	2
South				**121**
Army	2	0	0	2
Kent	1	3	1	5
Devon	2	1	3	6
Dorset	0	2	0	2
Oxfordshire	1	4	0	5
Sussex	2	3	2	7
Hampshire	4	2	3	9
Wiltshire	7	6	2	15
London	8	5	6	19
Somerset	3	4	2	9
Gloucestershire	3	9	2	14
Surrey	1	1	2	4
Hertfordshire	0	1	2	3
Middlesex	1	1	7	9
Essex	1	1	0	2
Berkshire/Buckinghamshire	9	0	1	10
Totals	**150**	**108**	**107**	**365**

Source: Kelly Simmons, The Football Association, Potters Bar 1998

Comparing tables 3.3 and 3.4, overall the number of women with coaching qualifications has remained, at best, roughly level. However, when we see that the total of 365 in Table 3.4 represents those qualifying over three years, as opposed to the total number of women coaches and the figure of 381 from Table 3.3 includes women with first aid and coaching qualifications the situation is much worse. The combined effect of the new generation of coaching courses and the formation of a coaches association has severely limited the number of women coaches at B Licence Level. Whether women who hold the Junior Team Managers qualification are unwilling to join an association of coaches, and why fewer women are obtaining qualifications overall would be an avenue for further research and analysis.

5. Conclusion

In the English system, teams based in schools and colleges are a growth area but are not the main route for elite players to develop their ability or for national selection. As we've seen, the traditional women's teams such as Doncaster Belles, Premiership affiliated teams like Arsenal, and most recently, the semi-professional Fulham are the main providers of representative players. In addition, the place of educational establishments looks set to become a key area in understanding of female football at participation and elite level. The idiosyncrasy of the English case and the rather different attributes of the US model suggest this topic to be in need of amplification. By extension, it would be useful to develop a view of the role of young elite, perhaps semi-professional, women players in defining their own involvement.

Alice Rossi calls 'the diminishing flow' the presence of women in inverse relation to rewards within a given occupation, that is, the higher the rank and prestige the smaller the number of women.[102] Where the proportion of women is greater the deficiency of rewards, as compared with those of men, is higher. This concluding section applies the concept to women's football in England in accounting for the size of the available reserves of coaches. It would make little sense to stress the fact that there are so few women coaches without demonstrating how many women are engaged in football studies, nor to point to the low numbers of A Licence coaches if women hardly took part in other kinds of advanced physical education study. The oral evidence indicates that women who play also adopt ancillary roles in administration, coaching and officiating usually in conjunction with their participation, not as an alternative. Margaret Talbot has made point with relation to sport's bureaucratic elites which the findings of this chapter support:

> Sport remains one of the most conservative and inflexible areas of public life, lagging far behind other social structures. Distributional data has demonstrated that in Europe, despite more than a decade of strategies and actions to support progress towards gender equity in sports organisations, women are still under represented in executive and decision making positions.[103]

It is not only in England that football has promoted a form of equality for women while at the same time preserving rigid social distinctions. In the case of FA committee members in particular, it is necessary to accumulate wide-ranging experience as committee leader for advancement to senior and executive posts. This has produced the disturbing situation for women in the

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[102] Alice Rossi *Essays on Sex Equality* Chicago: London: University of Chicago Press 1970 p.37.

organisation that it is not in the formative years so much as the later years that inequality is conspicuous and hence very few women continue to make it through the pyramid of coaching qualifications to the top. In administrative terms, Josephine King makes this point about women leaders in international football administrations in the two following ways:

> One of the questions...is whether this increased participation has yet translated into significant advances in the number of women leaders in the sport of soccer and has it embraced all ethnic and disadvantaged groups...At the same time, it would be a mistake and dangerously limiting, to see the question as entirely one of women achieving and leading only in women's soccer.[104]

The creation of a women's football separate subcommittee has led to the integration of the women as provisional and partial and much remains to be discussed on this issue. The concern to develop women's football by wealthy, high status sports administrations is often presented as altruistic. Of course football is not alone in constantly needing to sell its brand of sport to successive generations of players. Nor is it unusual that women's football should have achieved some measure of success as entertainment at the same time as facing considerable challenge. However the idea of football for women as a nationally or globally popular game belies the patchy growth and controversial image that is still the most enduring feature of the sport. Women's football in England in its current form does not lend itself to mass spectatorship in the form of ticket purchasing fans or a large audience and until this changes professionalisation is unlikely to occur to any significant degree. The consuming public must be interested, able and willing to pay. Current English plans to fund a women's professional league through satellite television are less than straightforward. The creation of a discrete identity for the possible English or European league or the extension of some form of the men's game will be instrumental in how the venture presents itself and so the exploration of the way that women players are mediated and represented is another area for further study which the following chapter begins to address. However, the development of an emergent international market implied by consumerist narratives and televised professional matches therefore should not obscure the regional diversity of communities within women's football culture and a considerable body of work has still to elaborate this.

The evidence from legal, educational and coaching material is that football remains a protected sphere for male workers at the highest level. From a European perspective the revised article

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[103] Margaret Talbot 'Gendering the Agenda in Sport Decision Making' European Women and Sport Conference *Women, Sport and Culture: How to Change Sports Culture* 7-11 June 2000 Helsinki.p. 1.

119(4) of the Treaty of Rome allows member states to adopt measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for the under-represented sex to pursue a vocational activity or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in their professional careers.[105] Women-only coaching courses at all levels currently provide examples of just such an activity. Quotas would also assist in opening the full range of coaching opportunities. In terms of both players and coaches the football profession has been cautious about protecting its reputation and its monopoly on services by limiting the number of practitioners at elite level. Leaving overt discrimination aside, playing and coaching occupational communities exercise informal controls including exclusionary practices that limit membership. The strength of custom has institutionalised practice in delineating professional football as a unique territory of men. The most effective control of recruits has occurred at playing level. There are some women chief executives, marketing specialists, player's agents, journalists and coaches who have infiltrated the male game but they are notable as exceptions. The lack of recognition given to female performers is not merely a response to 'the world out there'. The construction of group identity by women players has been neither at the mercy of corporate production or as necessarily outside of, and 'other' to these influences. The structures and organizational aspects of English society discussed here consequently demonstrate contradictory perceptions of the women's football community.

An aspect of football that has altered immeasurably is the status of the sport itself following the removal of the maximum wage in 1961, the abolition of the 'retain and transfer' system in 1963 and the rise in transfer fees and wages since 1991.[106] In spite of the financial rewards of the male professional player however professionalism as it has manifested itself in women's football has been a mixed blessing as we've seen from the 1970s players who had to choose between a professional career and representing their nation.[107] As the issue of female professionalism in England becomes more pressing, women players will hopefully not have to make this choice, though, at the current time, some travel to the United States to follow a semi-professional career.

In summary, a key element in the development of the women's game is a consensus that increased commercialism and professionalism is desirable and bound to happen. This seems to be neither historically accurate nor inevitable in the near future. The widespread devaluation of women's sport, particularly of women football players, has impacted on the kind of policies and

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[104] Josephine King 'Women's Football and the Next Millennium' p. 4.
[105] Janice Richardson and Ralph Sandland *Feminist Perspectives on Law* p. 67.
[106] Tony Mason *Sport in Britain* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989 pp.162-3 Mason's figures for the 1985-6 season show that 4.4% of the 1,950 registered players earned £50,000 per annum and 40% less than £10,000.

practices intended to achieve a limited integration. For example, Bury women players were shocked to find that in exchange for the kit and training facilities that had been 'donated', each player was obliged to steward at professional matches to save wages.[108] So while there are ways in which the influence of male structures on women's football could be potentially beneficial, the ways in which the women's game is seen to be the ugly duckling to the swan raises fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of incorporating women into these frameworks. So a desire for respectability and kudos, implied by commercial and professional agendas, have yet to translate to more forceful demands for increased control and recognition. This is an issue that the next chapter debates. Though there is not a widespread public awareness of women playing football for over a century does not mean that there is nothing memorable about women's relationship to football. However, even today, the forms of commemoration owe much to informal customs of remembrance. It is to the more readily apparent representation of women players that the next chapter turns before looking at the less obvious oral history.

[107] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p. 54 ; Rose Reilly professional football player, Stewarton 4 April 2000.
[108] VR, Bury player and coach, Birmingham 3 October 1997.

CHAPTER FOUR
MEMORY AND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

1. Introduction

Holt and Mason have drawn the distinction between social and cultural history and sociology in approaching the study of contemporary British sport as follows:

> A key difference between a sociology of contemporary British sport and a social history is that history takes an interest in the past in its own right rather than using it as a source to explain the present...we have tried to piece together what mattered *then* rather than what matters now.[1]

For this study, the local and private sources are themselves representative of the view of the sport at any given time *and* as part of a longer tradition. Women's football began to pass into popular culture in very specific ways before the 1960s and the place of items in local and private memory then is one issue. Contemporary players' perceptions regarding these items of memorabilia is another. Do newspapers and photographs support the idea of a gulf between the earlier women players and present-day participants or do they suggest women's football as an activity founded over time? Grant Jarvie has written on the relationship between sport and nationalism:

> Sport itself often provides a form of symbolic action which states the case for the nation itself. The popular identification between athlete, team and nation or community has led to the suggestion that sporting struggles, and international triumphs and losses, are primary expressions of imagined communities.[2]

In asking to what extent this applies to women's football, the section asks what are the sources available for the construction of memory? How have English women players been viewed at home and abroad? What imaginary communities, if any, do they represent?

For example, in contrast to Downing Street receptions that appear to be a routine part of recognizing the middling performance of the male national team, interviews with England women players show how little each asks in return for giving up a week at training camp. Players receive

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[1] Richard Holt and Tony Mason *Sport in Britain 1945-2000* London: Blackwell 2000 p. ix Preface.
[2] Grant Jarvie 'Sport, Nationalism and Cultural Identity' in Lincoln Allison (ed.) *The Changing Politics of Sport* Manchester: Manchester University Press 1993 pp.74-5.

expenses of up to £15 a day and England training was notoriously unpopular under Hope Powell's predecessor, Ted Copeland.

> But now there are different rules and none of the staff are allowed to drink, which I think is a good thing. You can go in the bar and you can have one night to have family or boyfriends or whatever come over...say for 3 hours, which again stops the boredom and makes you feel more at home. Anything to make you happy or want to be at England, she's [Hope Powell] going to try to do, which is really good. Just three hours is good, which would never happen with Ted.[3]

> The drinking thing... they used to all in to the bar and we had to go in to our rooms, whereas Hope says they go in the bar but have to have orange or something and they allow us to do that if we want a drink of orange. Which allows us to make use of the facilities.[4]

> We weren't allowed to play cards with Ted because, he said, of the gambling aspect. But none of us gamble; we just play for fun, so, with Hope, she allowed us to play cards. She said, 'As long as you're not gambling'. Little home comforts she would let you do, which was good. The players really, I think they dreaded going to England. You really just wanted to play football and then be able to go home at the end of the day.[5]

> She was saying that she wanted to change it from people wanting to play for their country but not wanting to come here, to people wanting to play for their country and wanting to be here for a week or so. She definitely made a difference, cause we never had little things like that.[6]

The last two players are in their late 20s, have professional jobs and their own homes and yet they had previously been treated like children during my visits to England camps where, for instance, they were to be in their rooms by 9 o'clock. The players are the ones privileged to wear the England shirt and are consequently afforded rudimentary hospitality. The importance of the image of team representatives as respectable and worthy to wear the three lions is far greater than rewarding individuals financially or in terms of status. The profile of specific women players is considerably lower than that of junior professional male players, as is the importance of the team as a whole. As an imagined community there appears to be little popular or symbolic identification with these amateurs, who, in turn recognize the honour of representing their country and ask for little in the way of concession.

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[3] SB, Senior England player, Croydon 10 October 2001.
[4] MS, Senior England player, London 12 September 2000.
[5] MM, Senior England player, Liverpool 8 May 2001.
[6] AJ, England trialist, Manchester 10 July 2000.

The difficulty of reconciling feminist theory with practice in the lives of women was therefore nowhere more evident than in discussing the memory of women players. Particularly, the competing senses of what women players hope and expect to achieve. This enabled me to consider the consequence of a range of aims and tactics for women's football. One approach could be to write revisionist histories to place women *in* sport. For example, at the recent European Women and Sport Conference the place of women in aviation history as pioneers and record setters was the subject of a display of photographs.[7] However, to write a history of football more broadly in which women were included is too large an undertaking for this chapter or work as a whole. Instead I have taken a theme, football as a mass-mediated sport, to lead to an exploration of how to construct a memory of women playing football which looks backwards but also has implications for the present and future. This chapter mainly retraces the steps of previous generations and is followed by one which primarily focuses on contemporary players but, overall, the pattern is sometimes made more vivid by juxtaposing the two more closely.

The lack of remembrance of women players is not just unlike men's football, it is distinct from, for example, the American National Hall of Fame for Women's Baseball. Also known as primarily a wartime activity, one way the sport has passed in to popular memory is the film *In A League of Their Own*, starring Geena Davies and Madonna. The Hall of Fame is a museum to house the exhibits of that era.[8] Why and how does women's baseball speak to contemporary America in a way that women's football does not speak to English society? A recurring pattern from the 1920s to the present time is the lack of influence of women in decision-making roles or in positions of power at the top level in their own sport. This has influenced not only the form of women's football but also the arrangement of memory. The head of women's football in the RAF and chief administrator of the Combined Services Squad for 2001-2003 made this point during our interview. Not only was she the first woman to attend the football committee meeting at RAF Uxbridge, where the Chair marked the novelty of the occasion by referring to Lady and Gentlemen, but she obtained the position as the result of taking over the administrative duties of a male predecessor. Because it had been part of his job, it became part of hers. Though eminently qualified in terms of football expertise (as an ex-Fodens player, and part of the team that won the Mitre Cup of 1974) her appointment was fortuitous rather than planned. Like volunteers in the

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[7] European Women and Sport Conference *Women, Sport and Culture: How to Change Sports Culture* 7-11 June 2000 Helsinki.

[8] http://www.baseballhalloffame.org 20 November 2001 the web-site gives the purpose of the collection as: 'The objectives of the NWB Hall of Fame are to recognise, promote, and encourage women players and leagues by providing awards and articles, and establishing baseball traditions of accomplishment.'

regional leagues, she had been so busy organising the players that she had given little time to compiling records:

> Your letter prompted me at our committee meeting last Tuesday to raise the point that we should be keeping records and when the RAF take over the Chair of the Combined Services team for its two year stint in August, we intend to begin to do that.[9]

There is a growing awareness that because a public memory of women playing football for over a century is not widespread does not mean that there is nothing memorable about women's relationship to football. However, even today, the forms of commemoration owe much to informal customs.

From Alfred Frankland and Arthur and Len Bridgett in the 1920s, the unofficial Harry Batt England team in the late 60s and early 70s, to the leadership of the WFA and the present FA system, men have dominated women's football administration. Women have led teams and leagues but have tended to rely on male sponsorship to hold high office. One example is the case of Pat Dunn as Chair of the WFA. Between 1 November 1969 at the meeting to convene a women's association and the first meeting in June the following year, she was deemed, first by the FA then the WFA, to be a liability to the association.[10] The qualified referee had contested FA rules regarding women officiating at affiliated matches. Her reluctant resignation was followed by the appointment of a male chair, Pat Gwynne. Sue Lopez's account of his subsequent role in preventing England from staging a World Cup is revealing.[11] Infighting in sporting and voluntary associations is not unique to women's football but it does point to a delicate identity space as linked to a weak role in decision making.

Rather than at the level of national pride, regional development of this localised self-respect is more evident and this is treated first in tracing public memory where images and writing combine in the production. Before moving on to the discussion of national and local press, other, relatively rare, demonstrations of local identity have occurred in civic celebration, and are treated first. Though comparatively less frequent, certain of these events have been crucial to the development

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[9]PMD, Fodens player, Wing Commander in the RAF and chief administrator of the Combined Services Squad for 2001-2003, 26 June 2001.
[10] FB, player 1950-74, coach and Women's Football Association administrator, Grimsby 12 May 1998.
[11] Sue Lopez *Women on the Ball* p.63.

of a community of women players. Exceptional in scale and significance for example, were the 1992 Preston Guild celebrations that reunited some of the original the Dick, Kerr players.

2. We'll support you ever more? The public and private memory of women's football

The following section of the chapter uses examples of key texts in the public domain to examine the discrepancy between representations of femininity in the media and the lived experience of players. The evidence proposed a fragile memory of women's football constructed of composite elements. When a contemporary English woman football player looks at images of a woman in bloomers or sometimes a skirt, playing in heavy leather boots and wearing a bonnet or cap, her primary feeling may not be one of identification. Images tell part of this story but, as Barthes has said, 'the photograph (in its literal state), by virtue of its absolutely analogical nature, seems to constitute a message without a code'.[12] This, he goes on to elaborate, enables the photograph to provoke awareness of its 'having-been-there' a reality which we are distanced from by the present. However, the 'absolutely analogical' nature of the photograph means that it is both similar in certain respects to what it represents and a partial representation of information. Using two examples this can be applied to reading the images of women's football from the 1920s.

The postcard at Appendix A is a good example of this. Fred Spurgin cards are highly collectable, and the eroticised player, the huge crowd and awe of the male players tells us something about the public view of women's football at that time. This is in contrast to the posed familial propriety of the Chapman card at Appendix B. These two examples provide very different images of women. The admired curves of the exceptional individual Spurgin player seem to place her historically before the 1920s flapper made a 'skinny' shape for women fashionable though her hair is bobbed. The mobcaps, tunics and full sleeved shirts of the Chapman card also mark the players as belonging to the distant past. The mobcaps, tunics and full sleeved shirts of the Chapman card mark the players as belonging to the workplace and their shapes are hidden by such Rational wear. The setting of the second card overall suggests restraint and order, including the central placement of male trainers and a female chaperone at the back of the group. Given the likely ages of the players, some of whom do not appear to be adolescents, this perhaps suggests the protection of female modesty. There are many more postcards of this kind from which a

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[12] Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* trans. Richard Howard, London: Cape 1982 p.277.

visual history could be compiled, from Plymouth training on the beach in the early decades of this century to Dick, Kerr's taking part in inter-war holiday parades. The depictions in the images intended for public distribution compare with those for private consumption, for example personal photographs. In spite of the reservations expressed above this source could be valuable in providing contemporary players with a sense of tradition and community even if there is also a sense of distance and surprise. In addition, there are a number of images as yet in private collections, including the examples of Bridgett's United included later in this chapter which share with other sporting photographs a sense of frozen drama and show how rare it is for female football players to be photographed whilst playing. If collected and placed on public view, local and family memories may guide us to an understanding of who the faces looking back at us are, of how football came to be part of their life and the extent of their involvement. In Joan Whalley's scrapbook and Nancy Thompson's collection these snaps include other sporting and social events in which the players participated, tour and travel shots and portraits of individuals with whom friendships clearly became established. For instance, Joan annotated each photo, 'Having tea with the mayor at Stalybridge', 'On the Pleasure Beach at Blackpool with the French team' or just 'Kitty' and 'Madelene'. It would be rewarding to compile and juxtapose these images and artefacts of remembrance in a collection which could also include the moving image.

Again, only private photographs of Alice Mills' visit to the 1952 Preston Guild survive, though in Pawtucket the local press and dignitaries acknowledged her contribution to civic life at the time of her death and beyond (referred to in Chapter Two).[13] The Guild Charter was granted in the twelfth century and it is celebrated every twenty years as an expression of local business success and civic celebration of local achievement. In 1992 women's football was included as part of the mixture of activities including trade fairs, carnival processions, aesthetic productions, and sporting competitions. Gail Newsham was instrumental in contacting surviving players of the Dick, Kerr's Ladies' team seventy-five years after it was founded. She describes the recognition extended to the squad, who had not seen each other for over thirty years and also the mystique of the Dick, Kerr tradition in Preston as a primary factor in encouraging her to play over and above the kick-about in the street:

> So many people lived in such a small area... we used to play on concrete and chuck yourself just in the street or a place where there's a bit of grass... We played centring or heading, bringing in stuff like that and I always played out me

[13] Winnifred Bourke 'Lambert's Celebrate 50th' *Pawtucket Times* 18 November 1975 p.5; John Talbot *Eulogy for Alice Mills Lambert* 15 October 1994 personal communication 30 June 2000.

> tree. I had always heard people talk about the 'Dick, Kerr' team... About this mysterious women's football team. I never saw them but heard there was this legend in Preston and I remember playing on the park and people saying, "You know, you've got more ideas than all these lads" so I thought I'd look for them.[14]

The women were rarely identified individually in newspaper reports. The collective recognition of Dick, Kerr Ladies' related directly to their sporting and charitable achievements from 1921 to 1965. 'Proud Preston' has a well-developed sense of itself as a football town, from the beginnings of the League to the recently established National Football Museum; having the leading women's team would match this constructed identity. At the 1992 awards each woman was called out and applauded individually, though the newspaper reports were again keener to talk of the team's success.[15] The impetus to honour the players came not from town officials or from the local press but from a woman who had been an active player. Her actions were timely as the eldest surviving player, Edna Clayton, died two days after the celebration.

Some archived collections of local history present women's football as more of a burlesque activity. For example, the North West film archive collection, based at Manchester Metropolitan University, holds four examples of films containing women's football from the period 1945-1980 in carnivalesque settings. Ronald Frankland, son of Alfred, produced one film of Dick, Kerr Ladies playing matches and visiting the Territorial Army Barracks at Cross Lane Salford.[16] The other films, respectively at Haslingden Carnival 1950; a Garden Party and Pensioners' Picnic and Salford Festival 1980 give a different picture.[17] Salford Festival provides particular comparison with Preston Guild as it was the 750th anniversary of the Salford Royal Charter and over 250 cultural sporting and educational events took place between 23rd August and 6th September. However, in the four Trims derived from the master footage which refer to women's football, the five-a-side matches are placed in the context of an all girls sports day at Old Salford racecourse.[18] Since Manchester Corinthians, several of whom came from Salford, had for many years vied with

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[14] GN Lancashire 10 June 1999.
[15] 'Dick Kerr Ladies Reunited' *Lancashire Post* 2 August 1992 p.5.
[16] Ronald Frankland *Dick, Kerr Ladies' Football and TA Volunteers Circa 1945-1955* The North West Film Archive, Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, accession number 3441.
[17] Unknown producer *Haslingden Carnival 9 September 1950* The North West Film Archive, Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, accession number 578; Unknown producer *Garden Party and Pensioners' Picnic 1960* The North West Film Archive, Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, accession number 1228; Manchester Film and Video Workshop and Salford Council for Voluntary Service *Salford Festival 1980* The North West Film Archive, Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, accession number 1735.
[18] Manchester Film and Video Workshop and Salford Council for Voluntary Service *Salford Festival 1980* Trim 1 accession number 1736, Trim 2 accession number 1737, Trim 3 accession number 1754 and Trim 4 accession number 1763.

Preston (previously Dick, Kerr) for the claim to be England's premier team, local memory and pride appear to be less represented than women's holiday participation.

In turning from sources which mark milestones in civic life to continuously revised expressions of local identity in the press, my intention is not to suggest that the press has entirely ignored issues of national pride in women players. For example, the first victory of England's women on an international stage came in 1985 and again in 1988 in Italy in the unofficial World Cup, the 'Mundialito'. This was subsequently recognised by *The Times* newspaper that awarded them Sports Team of the Year.[19] This media interest was not sustained on a national level. Relative to the rise of the sports pages in the national press, women's sport generally and women's football particularly have been given scant coverage, especially in sporting rather than personality terms. More widely since the 1960s, there is some evidence of local pride shown by some provincial newspapers including the *Leicester Mercury* (EMGALS) and *Evening Standard* (Bennets). Regional newspapers and local publications therefore act as sources of information for the researcher and as possible mechanisms of remembrance for women's football in spite of the problem of using a vocabulary applicable to women players. For example, these 'pen pictures' of players taken from a 1923 programme:

> Miss Alice Kell (Dick, Kerr's Captain and Goalkeeper) Modest and unassuming off the field, cool and capable on it. Kicks with beautiful accuracy and judgement. Strangers who meet her express surprise that she is a footballer. They little know that the quiet, charming girl to whom they are speaking is captain of the most famous girls' team in the world and that she only occupies that position by virtue of her consistent and excellent play.
> Miss Dolly Cooper (Stoke's Captain and Centre-Half) Young, tall and robust. One of the best centre-half backs playing. Kicks powerfully, can trap the ball like a man, and feeds the forwards judicially. Is largely responsible for the success of the Stoke Ladies.
> Miss Lily Parr (Dick, Kerr's Outside-Left) A phenomenal player, and quite young. Big, fast and powerful, is tricky and can take corner kicks better than most men and scores many goals from extraordinary angles with a left foot cross drive, which nearly breaks the net. Is the tom-boy of the team, who always says exactly what she thinks about everybody and everything – often to the amusement and embarrassment of the other members of the side.[20]

We feel we know something of the players' personalities but little about their personal and social background.

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[19] 'Sports Team of the Year 1988' *The Times* 8 July 1988.
[20] *Stoke Ladies versus Dick, Kerr's Ladies* Horsfield Ground, Colne 22 September 1923.

As Victoria Bennet has written in her thesis on women sports journalists, by the time of the modern era of football, structures were in place for the dissemination of writing about football which made sports writing, as well as the business of sport, a male preserve. Articles on women's football predominantly support the conclusion that women's magazines and supplements to newspapers provide much of the coverage of female sport generally, rather than newspaper sports pages.[21] When stories of women do appear the style is trivial, sensational and highly opinionated, in common with journalists' love of the cliché. Women's football in the national press has become depicted as endlessly novel. This is borne out by the tedious repetition of headlines such as 'Women to Boot!', 'Agony for the goal-den girls', 'Women Get a Kick Out of Soccer!' and 'England aim to dominate Europe by fairer means than foul'.[22] The process of consolidation of land in the hands of male clubs during the course of the last century has been mirrored by the condensation of power in the print and media industries. As with male football's presence in the human geography of the country, the amount of written material on male football is so overwhelming that sub-genres are now distinguishable and writing about women's football is a decidedly minority activity.

For instance, the football comic, from the original *Roy of the Rovers* strip to the non-fiction magazines *Goal*, *Shoot!* and *Match*, was a genre distinctly aimed at boys, but also provides useful images of women's football from the 1960s onwards. The industry as a whole may have contributed to the expression in popular culture of the idea that girls don't like football by providing them with their own publications like *Twinkle*, *Jackie* and *Just17*. But though fantasy, romance, fashion and pop music may have been what little girls were meant to be made of and mad about, the consumers were likely to include boys and girls, men and women. The WFA certainly knew this when advertising for players in *Goal* in the early days and the coverage of the first Women's FA Cup Final in 1971, included some excellent photographs. However, the failure to use these magazines in broader terms affected the perception of the sport for women. For example a 1973 *Goal* article 'Men Only?' is very positive about women's participation but as the title suggests, the tone is one of justifying women's right to participation rather than taking this as a given. Pieces are often based on continued attempts to either confirm or confute the stereotype of the woman player. As the sports pages in the national press have grown, women's sport

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[21] I am indebted to Victoria Bennett for discussing issues with me arising from an early draft of her unpublished PhD thesis *Women Sports Journalists* at De Montfort University in June 1999.
[22] *Daily Express* 31 October 1978 p.14; *Evening Post* 19 September 1984 p.6; *Sportsnews* 12 October 1990 p.11; *The Guardian Sport* 10 December 1990 p.7.

generally and women's football particularly have been given scant coverage, especially in sporting rather than personality terms. This mediation has brought some awareness of, and recognition to, the sport. But for a more uncommon view of the portrayal of players, the ways that the participative element has been articulated in popular culture and collected largely in private are more interesting. A common thread throughout much of the media coverage is that women's sport is seen more often as a lifestyle choice than entertainment spectacle. Rather than reiterate what might be concluded from a common sense view, that women's football is barely represented in the media, the forms that coverage does take and the trends in the reportage of women and football are a starting point.

In 1974 Jimmy Hill opined 'Take a tip Revie... it's time to follow the girls![23] It is typical of a national press article to criticise the knowledge or ability of a professional male, in this case the then England manager, by characterising women's football as less sophisticated and therefore closer to an amateur, purist style. Hill develops his argument by applauding the shorter passing game of the women, the use of left-footed players in left-sided positions and solid defensive play. At a time when coaching in England was mistrusted, Revie's attempts to introduce experiments in formation and tactics were seen to be avant-garde. Praising women players for their lack of refinement is also a backhanded compliment in this *Daily Express* article:

> I went with all the usual male prejudices about soccer being 'unfeminine'; that the girls would break down and cry if someone kicked them or if the referee was a bit nasty and did not allow a goal. I saw instead the best game of football I have seen since those famous Wolves managed by Stan Cullis terrorised Europe in the 1950s...no 'aggro'...no 'acting' or cheating...and soccer of a standard...[I] remember watching as [a] schoolkid.[24]

The article is superficially about women playing football but is more of an examination of the author's masculinity. He asserts his specialist knowledge by referring to Wolves in the 1950s; demonstrates his patriotism by the choice of 'terrorised' to describe England's supremacy; reinforces ideas about girly behaviour, before, finally, referring to his own youthful idealism. Both Hill and Morgan use women's football in order to critique what is wrong with men's football. Sepp Blatter continued this theme in press releases prior to the 1999 Women's World

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[23] Jimmy Hill 'Take a tip Revie – it's time to follow the girls!' *News of the World* 12 November 1974.
[24] John Morgan 'You can call me a ladies' man' *Daily Express* 16 November 1977.

Cup one entitled, 'Women Don't Cheat'.[25] This kind of essentialism combines moral virtue with femininity.

Another style of article, not necessarily only in the tabloids, is a focus on the sexuality of the players. This can take the form of football as a having a masculinising influence, as in Peter Batt's 'Dates have the order of the boot' piece:

> Ask them to pose for glamour pictures...and you are odds on to wind up with a punch up the throat. The dedication to the sport is nothing short of fanatical. Only one of the team is married, the rest quite simply haven't got time for it.[26]

Though apparently positive, the following article from a broadsheet uses similar descriptive devices to describe the Algerian girls. Almost twenty years after *The Sun* article above, a piece on Islamic female players emphasises physicality and impolite behaviour.

> Coach Mohamed Dubabas makes his girls bend forward with arms spread-eagled. This coach is held in great esteem (the Kouba coach, Mohammed Chalal, confesses to being envious of him). His players listen intently, but remain on the wild side when they implement his orders. One player breaks her hand, howls, and is then back on the field. Dubabas says that there is no difference in terms of strategy between men and women. But "the girls play a purer football. I cannot push them physically as much as the men, but they are technically better players".[27]

In both stereotypes about sport as an expression of female disorder bordering on coarseness are rehearsed.

In contrast, some journalists suggest that women should play more 'like girls' and revert to an equally cliché ridden style where titillation is the undertone, for example this *Guardian* article which ran under the headline 'Bridge of Thighs'.

> What they need to do now is to redefine it [football] in feminine terms, not ape the men so much... especially those gum chewing players, holding their groins in the defensive wall for instance, and appealing for every throw in as a matter of course.[28]

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[25] Sepp Blatter *FIFA News* April 1999.
[26] Peter Batt 'Dates have the order of the boot' *The Sun* 17 April 1973.
[27] David Jones 'The beautiful, deadly game' *The Guardian* 6 November 1999.
[28] Frank Keating 'Bridge of thighs' *The Guardian* 16 May 1977.

The emphasis is clearly on the women, not the football. Much more rare is reportage like that of Chris Lightbown in *The Sunday Times* Sport section where the only reference to a player's body is a genderless remark, 'Spacey, who had tremendous control for a tall player... turns, dummies, changes pace and [has] sheer instant control'.[29]

Kate Battersby in the *Daily Telegraph* and Jean Simpson in the *Daily Express* have attempted to cover women's football in the form of a more regular, detailed review of the sporting action.[30] More often polemic writing by women journalists, including Emma Lindsay, Sally Weale and Katharine Viner, occurs sporadically in response to a particular incident.

> ELEANOR FRIEL was kicked out of a taxi and left on the streets - because the driver found out she was a referee. 'He said women should not be watching football at all, they should be at home doing the cleaning and washing,' Friel says. 'And he was being serious!' She was left with a mile-long walk home; the union that represents Leeds taxi drivers says the cabbie could lose his licence if he is identified. Friel, meanwhile, has just started refereeing Leeds Sunday League matches.[31]

The association in the national press of women's football stories with crises in male football on the one hand and with incidents where women challenge ideas of feminine appropriate behaviour on the other contributes to the myth of impropriety that continues to surround the sport. Many projects of this kind rely on national and local newspapers as substantive primary sources. A small number of the sources for this study came directly from newspapers but the contribution of local press cuttings has been particularly valuable. In weighing this, the argument now turns to local and private collections.

The *Stoke Evening Sentinel* is worth particular mention as it did more than provide a source of primary documentation for this study. The newspaper articles resound with phrases such as

> It took Stoke City 99 years to bring a national soccer trophy to the Potteries, but these footballing females of the 1920s covered themselves in glory and won the English Ladies' FA Cup without too much trouble.[32]

The *Stoke Evening Sentinel* excerpt portrays the past as a way of framing the present; an emotional reaction that does not require identification with the subjects. It is therefore possible to

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[29] Chris Lightbown 'Invincible Belles' *The Sunday Times Sport* 29 April 1990.
[30] Kate Battersby 'Mohr earns Germany first leg advantage' *Daily Telegraph* 2 December 1994.
[31] Katharine Viner Sidelines *The Guardian* 21 January 1997.

be proud of the women of the past without the obligation to support individual women players, teams or the sport as a whole in the present. This is further emphasised when the private sources make clear that the English Ladies Cup was a creation specifically designed to foster such local pride based on the pre-eminence of the home team, for example, the figure on both the trophy lid and on the wooden plinth was designed in Stoke colours before a ball was kicked.[33] The *Stoke Evening Sentinel* repeats retrospective articles of the victory as and when there is special interest in either the Bridgett family or women's football.[34] The articles have an undertone of excellence through fair play, modesty and dignity, in keeping with the Stanley Matthews legend that Stoke may like to perpetuate. Family and local legend has it that a very young Stanley Matthews looked up to Arthur as a role model but he would have to have been *very* young for the story not to be apocryphal.[35]

More intriguing were the photographs shown below (Figure A and B). The 'set of rules' which are operating now contains themes which overlap and intersect with the developments prior to the 1960s but they also indicate a specific historical point at which there is the potential for this knowledge to change.

FIGURE A

[32] 'They Were The Champions' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 12 March 1976 p.5.
[33] The trophy is shown in Appendix C.

FIGURE B

Figure A is one of the first examples of women players in action; the English player is E Carroll, who reputedly trained by delivering sacks of coal to her father's customers. In spite of the mobcaps worn by the English team (but not the French) the photographs show the recognisable elements of the modern football uniform including shorts and shin-pads. The second photograph (Figure B) shows the stands before the game and the first (Figure A) a fair crowd but it would be difficult to calculate spectators in the round from this shot. The tour was significant because of the role of Arthur Bridgett, the ex-professional male player had the organisational expertise and contacts to arrange the tour because of his participation in the first full England International in Hungary 1909. Arthur is holding the flag in the second photograph (Figure B). The existence of the photographs was of little interest to FC Barcelona or the *Stoke Evening Sentinel* when I contacted them but again suggests that family and local collectors hold valuable memorabilia in the forms of cups, medals and photographs that could, and should, provide us with otherwise elusive detail.

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[34] 'Dolly Led Stoke (Ladies) to Victory in Cup' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 21 January 1955; '1922 Cup Victory for Stoke Ladies' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 10 February 1968; 'They Were The Champions' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 12 March 1976; 'Survivor Recalls Famous Team' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 18 April 1992.
[35] 'Mr Len Bridgett' *Stoke Evening Sentinel* 22 January 1955; Peter Bridgett, son of Arthur Bridgett Stoke 12 July 1999.

Other local newspaper reports include captioned photographs individual descriptions, statistical histories of teams and honours won. The treatment of Dick, Kerr's in the Preston press is perhaps the most well-developed example of local coverage of a local women's team before the 1980s when Doncaster Belles rose to fame.

> A crowd much larger than the organisers had hoped for turned up at the Walker-Lane ground, and at the start of the game there were large crowds behind both goals and on the natural grandstand provided by the hill at the side of the pitch. The spectators were lines six and seven deep round the touchline. The Mayoress of Hyde was cheered when she kicked off for the match with a well directed punt down the field. The play was followed with terrific interest by the spectators. There were many professional touches which were eagerly recognised ... within five minutes, Joan Whalley, easily the finest player on the field, equalised with a shot from 20 yards.[36]

This again suggest itself as a topic worthy of further study in its own right because, in contrast, if one were to look in the same places as historians of men's football it would be possible to conclude, as Murphy, Williams and Dunning have, that women's football 'has rather a low status with few participants and spectators'.[37] Polley describes the commonly used sources available to the researcher as:

> The honours list and the trophy room; the collection and worship of records and statistics; the sense of place and local rivalry present in derby fixtures; even the mediocre club runners insistence on maintaining an account of personal best.[38]

The clubhouse of Highfield Rangers FC in Leicester which has a tradition as a club proud of its mainly black identity is a good local example of 'the honours list and the trophy room' which shows how limited these sources have been for this study.[39]

Highfield Rangers have two photographs of the women's team in the clubhouse which has approximately fifty items of memorabilia in total. The largest single collection of items is dedicated to Nigel Burke, who died young, and includes press clippings, individual and team photographs. Whereas the photographs and cups for men remember the teams of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the photographs of the women are from the 1998 and 1999 seasons. The

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[36] Joan Whalley's scrapbook, Hyde 1947.
[37] Patrick Murphy et. al. *Football on Trial*: *Spectator Violence and Development on the Football World* London: Routledge 1990 p.2.
[38] Patrick Murphy *Football on Trial* p.3.
[39] Highfield Rangers Oral History Group and the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research *Highfield Rangers: An Oral History* Leicester: Leicester City Council 1993 p. 113.

gradual pace of assimilation and partial accommodation of women players into men's clubs can be reflected in aesthetic forms, as well as in sporting terms. For instance, in the 1980s Highfield supported a netball team before a women's football team was created in 1991 by attracting players formerly with Leicester Ladies FC. Rangers have no images of the netball team and two photographs of the women's football team in the clubhouse out of approximately twenty items of memorabilia. In both *Highfield Rangers: An Oral History* and the clubhouse itself, women are memorialized in a tenth of the available space though there have been females affiliates for half of Highfield's history. This local example is indicative of a more widespread lack of representation of the female player in all kinds of media.

The trend of conspicuously not honouring women players continues to this day as individual players are largely still unknown to us, even at elite level. When England Captain Gill Coulthard joined the 100 club of International appearances she was awarded a small commemorative medal before the kick-off of an international game watched by 1,000 people. Unlike Mia Hamm of the United States (116 caps) and Carolina Morace of Italy (108) she is largely unknown as a media figure. Mia Hamm was honoured when, for example, Nike named the largest building on their corporate campus after her. No English woman is recognised in public memory as a great football player. Three women, Sylvia Gore, Sue Lopez and Kelly Simmons have been rewarded in the Queen's honours list for their contribution to sport but none is a household name. Recently, while on a course with twenty senior football coaches and referees, few people recognised Sue Lopez as a professional player or congratulated her on her recent honour, though she has twice been featured in *The Times* as Coach of the Year.[40]

The problem of where to place women players in the public consciousness was reflected in a recent Nike advertising campaign. The 1997 advertisement used Joan Whalley to evoke a tradition of women players. No contemporary English equivalent of Mia Hamm could be found to promote women's football so Joan was pictured in kit and wearing Lily Parr's boots.[41] Unfortunately, the stylist decided not to use photographs of the young player and groomed Joan beyond her normally casual look to fit the convention of a coifed older lady. Tomlinson has usefully described the reservation of the male gaze in football for men as players and as symbols

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[40] Jenifer O'Neill 'Awards night indicates a growing respect' *The Times* 3 December 1999.
[41] Lily Parr, not to be confused with Lily from Parr, is a personal heroine and deserves a book, both because of her football prowess and her eccentricities. She played for Dick, Kerr Ladies for 31 years.

of the game itself as a form of 'male romance'.[42] Heroic figures such as Bobby Moore and Pele are represented in advertisement after advertisement in prime physical shape.[43] When Mia Hamm is depicted as active, attractive and young, contemporary English women may not want to play 'like an old woman' as Joan was presented.[44]

Where would memorabilia be located if it were to be collected? Some collectors wished to integrate their collections with a Football Association archive but others were vehement about keeping both the memory and memorabilia very separate. As one senior WFA administrator told me when I asked about an archive:

> There isn't any. I burned it. I was so angry when the WFA agreed to amalgamate with the FA, I had a big bonfire and I burned the lot...I know I shouldn't have done it now but I was so frustrated.[45]

The material that participants shared with me included programmes, advertisements, personal scrapbooks and correspondence. These compilations contradict the views of the editor of *She Kicks*, Jennifer O'Neill, currently working professionally in the production of a public image of women's football, who wrote in 1999:

> The older generation of women footballers have an inferiority complex about their achievements.[46]

The material in private collections, like the leagues, fitted the players' own needs. An example is the evolution of the scrapbook from personal journal, to club magazine, to fanzine. These more commercial forms came later at a time when domestic football was moving into new markets.

In the period of this study, academics investigating women's football have contacted me including several looking at sexuality and body image at undergraduate level, the leader of a comparative project in a French university, and a student of female football clothing to name but a few. It appeared that the impetus to know more comes from a gap in the popular and public

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[42] Alan Tomlinson 'Sport Leisure and Style' in D Morley and K Robbins (eds.) *British Cultural Studies – An Introduction* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999 p.239.
[43] For example the current *KICK IT OUT* promotional material distributed by the Football Supporters Association.
[44] *Women's World Cup 1999 Final Programme* FIFA Los Angeles July 7 p.4. for example shows Hamm dribbling at speed with a football.
[45] SQ, ex-England international and WFA administrator, Bath 10 June 2001.
[46] Jennifer O'Neill 'Awards night'.

memory. Questions about when women first played, what forms the games took and who the players were appear to be driven by a sense of this lack of information.

> Q Do you keep any mementoes or scrapbooks?
>
> A I try to keep everything. I give away my England shirts: I've only kept one of each number.
>
> Q Who do you give them away to?
>
> A Friends and family or whoever asks. I would never ask anyone if they want a shirt, I would wait until they ask me. I've given some to a teammate and my friends from school. I gave one to my first manager. I framed that one. That was my first ever England shirt, cause I always said if I ever played for England you're getting my first shirt – he was in tears.[47]

A strong theme which emerges from the interviews and questionnaires is that the structure of women's football clubs since 1960 has been premised on the commitment of the individual woman 'prosumer' who has both generated football play and consumed the products of that play.[48] Official recognition is evident as a strong theme for teams that did play after 1921, in contrast to today. The charitable purpose of most games does not wholly account for the degree of public honour extended to individuals and teams. The integration of matches with public events to celebrate local pride has already been discussed above with relation to newspaper articles and film. The privately held material gives the point of view of the honoured guest. From attending the dinner at the Stretford Pageant to the crowning of the Ormskirk Rose Queen, football was, for some, their qualification to an invitation.[49] As I travelled around to meet these individual collectors, it seemed that one way of making sense of English women's participation in football would be to construct a collection of these items as they provide a framework for a larger-scale history. This also fits with the idea of difference that underpins the methodology of the thesis as a whole. The compilation would provide a point of departure, rather than an arrival and for this reason would require an interactive focus rather than one which emphasised narrative closure.

It would be interesting, for example, to appeal to the public to see if they held material relating to the use of the football matches as occasions for civic receptions. This has been a rare event in the more recent period of study and is unlikely to be revived in the near future so would help to make

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[47] SS, England player, Liverpool 29 July 1999.
[48] Alvin Toffler *The Third Wave* London: Pan in association with Collins 1981 p.46.

a point in visual terms about the constructedness of our present view of women's football as lacking spectacle. There is potentially a wealth of information, as we've seen between 1946 to 1949 Joan Whalley attended twenty civic receptions, a memorial service, helped to win the Pitman Challenge Cup and Shield, was invited to play for England and played in three international tournaments.[50] This is one scrapbook from one player. Another common practice was to accompany the teams out on to the pitch with a military band, which then played at half time. On the basis of the evidence for this smaller project it would seem highly likely that further research would reveal items of memorabilia which reflect a more extensive public awareness of women's football than has hitherto been discussed.

One example of this was the practical support of male professional footballers, especially as referees and trainers up until the 1980s. Usually their involvement ran concurrent with their professional career, rather than as an alternative to it. Jasper Kerr of Preston North End and Everton, Tom Finney of Preston and England and Frank Swift of Manchester City and England all acted as referee or linesman between 1946 and 1953 on more than one occasion.[51] Nor does this seem to have been only the case for the well-known and established teams. Two Lincoln City players, Andy Graver and John Garvie, often trained with Homestead Ladies (founded by the owner of Homestead Garage, Mr Harry Wilkinson) near Hykeham, Lincoln from 1959 to 1962.[52] With the change in status of the male professional in the last two decades, this kind of personal public support has declined as Football in the Community has increased.

It is the co-ordinated, regular schedule of matches played that is the most impressive feature of the player-held records and more research would reveal the arrangements for play, travel, and accommodation. Joan Whalley's scrapbooks cover the years 1921-55 and those held by more recent collectors such as Elsie Cook (1961-74) and Sheila Rollinson (1978-2001), make it possible to see repeated fixtures year on year, both locally, nationally and internationally as well as a continuity of players. In some instances the sport was willing to reproduce the same model as male football. Consequently, it seems obvious that there were relatively large crowds for elite teams and fewer supporters for the more average clubs. It was possible to fill in some of the gaps in the construction of memory of these women players. Homestead Ladies' performance was written up for publication in a local history text, still to be published. Excerpts from that work

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[49] Alfred FranklandScrapbook and Joan Whalley Scrapbook both held by Gail Newsham Lancashire 10 June 1999.
[50] Joan Whalley Scrapbook.
[51] Joan Whalley Scrapbook.
[52] MA Hird, local historian, North Hykeham 11 April 1999.

include Linda Dring knocking herself out on her own goalpost, a collision involving Hykeham's Shirley Reid in which a visiting centre forward's arm was broken and a 7-1 defeat at Ripley played in teeming rain and ankle-deep mud. The melodrama of these episodes is balanced by quieter pride in the feats of Audrey Mole, the leading goal scorer, and the leadership of Barbara Duncombe as captain.[53] This brings us onto the next section of the chapter which examines how such memory as has passed into public consciousness has been achieved and to what end.

3. The Struggle to Imagine a Community

On the whole, there has been a failure to collect and transmit a tradition of women's football. With reference to two examples, women writing about football and women's football on television, it's possible to outline the difficulties of constructing and disseminating a sense of community. This is another area where development has been neither progressive nor steady. This is evident from the match programmes in Appendix D where an entrepreneurial spirit was linked to women's football before the 1960s. The programmes were sponsored, included information and appeals in addition to affectionate, if patronising, nicknames and pen pictures of individual players. However, since the 1960s, magazines devoted to women's football such as *Spot Kick* ('England's hippest new women's football magazine') launched by Vic Atkins with the support of Coventry City Council, and *Action Replay* (The Women's Soccer magazine) launched in 1992 by Havant Ladies FC, have consistently failed to gain currency. The attitude of the WFA and the FA regarding the women's game as amateuristic is reflected in the format of the publications developed by them. Since 1969 the WFA ambition to respectable domestic competition and occasional friendly international led them to use the technology of the photocopier and line drawings of a woman player on the cover of their programmes. The authorities misunderstood the relationship of the print media and television as mutually reinforcing channels for public relations. Like other women's sport, women football players still complain about a lack of media interest. The sporting administrations have yet to establish either a coherent message about the sport or the publicity mechanisms to deliver it.

The publications of the WFA are revealing in this context. The 'Official Magazine of the Women's Football Association' ran from 1978-1981. The international focus and action photography combined with a glossy cover and several pages of in-depth coverage of league

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[53] MA Hird *North Hykeham*.

games and internationals, only to be replaced in February 1982 with 'WFA News: The Official Newsletter of the Women's Football Association' with broadly similar content condensed to four photocopied sides. The financial difficulties of the Association in November 1985 led to a typewritten, rather than typeset newsletter, without photographs but with the same mix of national and international results. However, the editorial for several editions appealed for unity on behalf of the Association. The headlines ran, 'Financial State of the Association', 'Are We Doing Enough?', 'A New Era is about to Start' and 'Report on the Future Development of the WFA and the New Regional Set Up'.[54] It is worth quoting in some detail to show why the dissemination of a community of women footballers through magazines, newsletters and fanzines should have been so problematic at the time:

> It is my fervent wish that one day I will go to a WFA Council meeting and report, that at long last we are striving and progressing together to achieve our goal of increasing participation... I have been your Chairman for two and a half years and have seen the membership decline, something the working party on women's football predicted eighteen months ago... The Future Rests With You. (sic)[55]

By July 1990 the *WFA News* was launched in typeset form, this time as 'The Voice of Women's Football' issue No.1and reverting to the mix of photographs, national and international news and newspaper clippings. The changes reflect not only the confusion of the association and the direction it should take but also re-launching the image of women's football following a crisis of finance or identity. Other magazines demonstrate both an awareness of the gap in the market on behalf of players and the same problems of distribution that official titles experienced.

Sunday Kicks began in April 1995 and, as with other fanzines and magazines, circulation to and consumption by a fractured audience affected its longevity.[56] Early WFA use of boys' magazines such as *Shoot* and *Goal* to advertise for players and the occasional reference in these magazines to women and girls playing did little to change the gendered nature of such publications, whomever their eventual reading audience might be. A good example of this is *Football Today* which regularly ran either a single or double page article on women's football in the mid-1980s but again reflects a confusion in how best to present the players.[57] So *Sunday Kicks* expressly attempted to educate readers about women's football, and to give local contacts but it also

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[54] *WFA News* November 1985 p.1; *WFA News* July 1986 p.1; *WFA News* November 1986 p.1.
[55] Tim Stearn WFA Chairman *WFA News* January 1987 p.1.
[56] *Sunday Kicks: The Magazine for Women's Football* London: Grafex Print Copy Centre No. 1 April 1995- No. 15 July 1996.
[57] *FOOTBALL today* 11 Stourdale Road Cradely Heath West Midlands May 1985 - June 1986.

included topical and humorous articles. Using Sports Pages bookshops in Manchester and London, Sport in Print in Nottingham and the Independent Bookshop in Sheffield, it tapped into the conventional non-game outlets for fanzines. The action photograph on the cover of the magazine was followed by an editorial on, for example, changes to the rules for women such as the notorious basketball style time out, criticism of the England regime and of clubs unwilling to take promotion opportunities.[58] In-depth player and team analysis, international news, regional League results and news items were standard.

In contrast, *On The Ball* was initially an independent magazine with glossy production values, which in 1999 was taken over by the FA as the official magazine for women's football. In 2001 it was renamed *She Kicks*. In comparison with *Sunday Kicks*, *She Kicks* has production values more consistent with a teen magazine. There are profiles of players, equipment promotions and briefer articles, concerned with future projects. For example the Diary coverage of March and April's fixtures in *Sunday Kicks* listed weekly results and a commentary of the effects of these on team position in May 1995 in a three page article of densely written text. The April 1999 edition of *On the Ball*, however, asked a twelve-year-old player her nickname, likes and dislikes and plans for the future. The format of *She Kicks* suggests that the intention has been to attract players to the sport. The writers of *Sunday Kicks* were enthusiasts and had the support of many players and administrators. This kind of publication was of most benefit to the people who played and were in the culture. As a small-scale enterprise it also had the objective of improving communication, knowledge and commentary but is clearly for the declared fan. Given the difficulties of *Women's Soccer World* in the US, an independent magazine with world circulation but again with production difficulties that have limited circulation post Los Angeles 1999, *She Kicks* magazine will at least ensure a means of publicising recent developments. However, as one elite player put it in interview:

> Q You speak to a lot of girls over here and they don't know who Mia Hamm is?
>
> A That's because they just play for fun they don't read about football or watch it.
>
> Q You don't get 'Women's Soccer World'?
>
> A I get 'On the Ball'. I just get it for support really. It's getting better.[59]

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[58] *Sunday Kicks The Magazine for Women's Football* No. 1 April 1995, No. 5 September 1995 and No. 15 July 1996.
[59] SS, England player,Liverpool 29 July 1999.

This continues until the present day when *On the Ball* is aimed at elite and competitive women and girls, *Team Talk* magazine aimed at non-league male football and *Kick it Out* at those interested in race, usually racism in professional football. So the policy of differentiation rather than integration of women players is replicated outside the sport. Nor is the print media the only area where women are virtually invisible as players. Many of those women commentators who are now to the fore in professional sports media as presenters and writers followed the route of journalist to sports journalist, or had a famous male relative in the sport, for example Helen Rollason and Gabby Yorath. Few past or current women football players have access to a media profile except for discrete events such as the Women's World Cup or Women's FA Cup. Nor, as yet, do women's matches appear regularly on television, other than satellite channels. This reflects the wider state of affairs for women's events and amateur sport but it does contrast sharply with events in the recent past. Television had a demonstrable role in increasing interest in the community of women football players in the 1980s.

With the appointment in 2001 of a public relations executive for women's football, the considerable resources of the FA could now begin to make up some ground in the print and televised media. In contrast to the difficulties of language shown in this section, for example, the women of the United States team are linked with their audience in titles like *The Girls of Summer*, *All American Girls*, *Go for the Goal*, *The Game and the Glory*.[60] The image-makers are also astute in using teen-based marketing to describe players, as one title declares, *Mia Hamm Rocks!*[61] Television is a primary tool of sports attempting to establish themselves with wider audiences and can make heroes and heroines overnight. The 1991 Broadcasting Act ended the restriction on competitive bidding and major events are now sold to paying audiences. As of the end of 1998 The Olympic Games and Wimbledon Finals are the only two A List guaranteed sports on terrestrial TV where women compete. The World Cup, European Championship and FA Cup are three of the eight other sports events, indicating of the primary importance of football in televised sport. The constant theme of women's sections of football associations internationally is that more media attention and higher levels of sponsorship would help to develop the game.[62]

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[60] Jere Longman *The Girls Of Summer: the US Women's Soccer Team and How it Changed the World* New York: Harper Collins 2000; Marla Miller and Zachery Bryan *All American Girls: The US National Women's Team* Los Angeles: Archway 1999; Mia Hamm and Aaron Heifetz *Go for the Goal: A Champion's Guide to Winning in Soccer and Life* San Francisco: Quill 2000 and Michelle Akers and Greg Lewis *The Game and the Glory* New York: Zandervan Books 2000.
[61] Chloe Weber *Mia Hamm Rocks!* Champaign Illionis: Welcome Rain Publishing 1999.
[62] FIFA *FIFA Survey of Women's Football* January Zurich 1997.

This appears to be borne out by the case of Channel 4 in England in the 1980s. It is also strongly indicated by the role of television companies in owning Women's USA, the professional league in the United States. The FA wants to mirror this to use television to create a women's professional league by 2003.[63] The paradox at the heart of this plan is that a media form that has studiously ignored women's football for the last decade is supposed to foster a new era of professionalism in a very competitive market. The relationship between women's football and television remains undetermined but is likely to be crucial in the future of the sport.

Undoubtedly the greatest assistance before the advent of digital TV was the launch of Channel 4 in 1982 with a remit of covering minority interests. In terms of sport this included examples that are currently still frequently shown such as Italian League football, the Tour de France, American football and examples that are no longer regular items such as Australian Rules football, Sumo wrestling and, more rarely, women's football. The Sunday afternoon scheduling provided continuity of coverage, especially WFA Cup matches from 1989 to 1992, and some England matches. The games were watched by up to 3 million viewers.[64] Sky took up where Channel 4 left off but showed the games on UK Living initially, leading to a million viewers for Cup Finals but excluding highlights of the later rounds as Channel Four had done. Both used women presenters but, as UK Living was more of a women's lifestyle format than a sports programme, women's football became perceived as an interest story rather than as primarily a spectacle.

Women's football has yet to re-establish itself as a sport on television. Even when, for example, in 1998, Sky was persuaded to cover the England versus Germany World Cup qualifier at Milwall, the consequences are debatable. Naively, the organisers stationed cameras on the same side of the ground as the 5,000 supporters, leaving the TV audience with the spectacle of empty stands. Yet viewing figures were very good, drawing higher figures than WWF Wrestling, Golf and some male soccer programmes.[65] In a week in which the 6th round of the FA Cup and a 5 day Test between England and the West Indies were also contested, the programme came seventeenth overall.[66]

There is a stronger history of television drama based on women's relationship to football than sports coverage. The most recent serial, *Playing the Field*, uses women's football as a metaphor

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[63] http://www.the-fa.org/thisisthefa/womensproleague 21 November 2001.
[64] X25 Partnership Report *Top sports Programmes, channel by channel, week ending 20 February 1984* p. 1
[65] X25 Partnership Report *Top sports Programmes ,channel by channel, week ending March 8* March 8 1998 p. 2.
[66] X25 Partnership Report *Top sports Programmes week ending March 8* p. 2.

for northern working-class female grit, heavily influenced by Pete Davies' book, *The Belles* in 1995. The drama shows little football and lots of socialising. The producers of the documentary *The Belles* depicted the players as uncouth ladettes. The reception of both programmes in women's football was mixed. For some players, including a few Belles, it upheld stereotypes of mannish women players consuming lager as enthusiastically as playing football. For others it was more positive.

> Yes, the programme was good, but didn't really do women's football any favours with some of the players seen on the TV.[67]
> OK, but not true to life in some bits.[68]
> They are both very good, I was in both of them [The Belles and Playing the Field]. The filming was good fun. The actresses enjoyed it and we are still in touch.[69]

In *Playing the Field* attempted suicide, family secrets, affairs between team members and their spouses, fraud and violence are interspersed with scenes of singing, dancing and heavy drinking. One character has affairs but wishes she hadn't; another pretends she is the sister, not the mother of her child; a third bullies her husband in fits of unprovoked rage and a fourth is gullible to the point of idiocy. In this programme football is the source of tensions but also of womanly togetherness to overcome problems that are, in essence, created by the flaws of the characters themselves. The formula has proven to be so popular that it has moved to a prime time slot. Again this provoked mixed reactions amongst players.

> Playing the Field I felt was very good as a drama series. Some of it summed women's football up, some of it was nothing like what goes on, but it was good to watch – I enjoyed it.[70]
> Although I enjoyed seeing a programme on women's footballers (and the fact that it was based on us, and some of us starred in the football action shots) the programme gave the image that female footballers are alcoholic lesbians who sleep around.[71]
> Playing the Field showed women's football in a true sense.[72]
> Soapy, dramatised, the women playing football isn't the main issue on the programme – it's just a novelty topic dramatised into a TV programme.[73]

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[67] SR, Doncaster Belles and England player, Doncaster 11 August 1998.
[68] DM, Doncaster Belles and England player, Doncaster 11 August 1998.
[69] JM, Doncaster Belles and England player, Doncaster 11 August 1998.
[70] Non-elite questionnaire 12.
[71] Elite questionnaire 3.
[72] Non-elite questionnaire 10.
[73] Elite questionnaire 7.

In terms of the process of TV dramatisation over the period the 1970s and early 80s saw *Gregory's Girl, Those Glory, Glory Days* and *The Manageress*. These three examples dealt both sympathetically and humorously with women's involvement in football within traditions of heterosexual narrative. For example the domestic conflict a woman manager experienced as a result of her power over an all-male workforce. The brief endorsement appearance of David and Victoria could prevent the feature film, *Bend it like Beckham!* produced by Deepak Nayar and directed by Gurinder Chander, from going straight to video. The fictional Hounslow Harriers manage to get to the Women's FA Cup Final against the odds, in a style recognisable from Chander's earlier work, *Bhaji on the Beach*, as a 'chick flick'. This formula has been applied to women's football rather than reflecting the subculture itself, though Shaznay Lewis (the ex singer-songwriter of All Saints) who also has a cameo, was at the Arsenal academy. *Playing The Field* and *Bend it Like Beckham!* tap into the novelty of women's football. The idea of bending the rules rather than breaking stereotypes does little to take forward the image of the female player.

This led me to ask would women's football have to change to become television-friendly entertainment or would the attitude of television producers and audiences have to change to accommodate female players? There is a great deal to be concerned about if the unofficial Mexico World Cup proved to be such a great success with TV audiences partly because players wore short, tight pink uniforms. A fundamental change in media attitude would have to take place were television to popularize women's football in England. The Women's USA league in the United States had the success of Atlanta 1996 and Women's World Cup 1999 on which to build. Even with the considerable backing of AOL, Time Warner and Comcast, television audiences of 5 million and average gates of 8,000 in the first year indicate some way to go before the league is established, especially with a television audience.[74] As Lauren Gregg, Vice President of Player Personnel for the franchise, identified in our interview the relationship between live support and televised product is unclear but in need of improvement:

> Q. What do you feel has been the single most significant achievement this year?
>
> A. Selecting a single achievement is very difficult as many occurred. However, I would say fan support. We consistently averaged over 8,000 fans per game.

[74] Barbara Allen, Women's USA Chief Executive, New York 10 September 2001.

Q. Could you identify an area, which has surpassed your own expectations for the league, and one, which you thought, fell short?

A. Most of my expectations were met. I was though really, really pleased with the level of play and collection of the world's greatest players. TV viewer ship remains a challenge for soccer in this country. Although not bad, we want to improve our numbers there.

Q. How would you describe the developing public profile of the league?

A. I think we have provided a welcomed addition to the professional sports market. We are family oriented, affordable, entertaining and very integrated into our communities-both critical ingredients to sustaining the league over time.

Q. How important has live spectator support been relative to the TV audience?

A. Both are important. Clearly, you need fans to create a truly professional environment. We accomplished that and intent to work to build upon it. The relationship between a live audience and a TV audience is less defined to me. However, the appeal of the game is often tied into the atmosphere surrounding the event itself. Our fans contributed to that making the TV product very exciting and inviting.[75]

With the disappointing live attendance at the 1995 World Cup in Sweden and the strength of men's football in Europe, the omens for television-supported professional league in England are more challenging.

Nor have commercial interests more generally invested in women's football to any great degree. There has been some advertising and sponsorship; for example, Lillywhite Sportswear supported the 1972 trials of the first official England team. Currently women's football is tied into men's as a combined sponsorship deal. Advertising of the sport itself has been patchy. Euro 96 marketed football to women in an overtly heterosexual way with the poster 'How can I lie back and think of England when Venables hasn't named the squad yet?' Two years later, women's football posters appeared with Ian Wright in a blonde wig, before being hastily withdrawn. In 1999 Nike advertisements of Arsenal's women's team included the young black player Rachel Yankey leaving the dressing room, presumably after playing, with the strap-line, 'Now I can help my boyfriend with his homework'. Change is slowly emerging and Adidas have recently created women's boots. US National Team player Kristine Lilly advertises the Predator Maneeta. The slogan is, 'There from the Start'. The implication is that not only was Adidas part of the making

[75] Lauren Gregg, Women's USA Vice President of Player Personnel, New York 10 September 2001

of a champion, but that this is the beginning of women's football. Struggles over the control of space have also played a central role in shaping the development of women's football and this remains a constant.

4. Conclusion

If, from the vantage point of today, the use of language and style of reportage that has been used to describe women players in various kinds of media appears anachronistic at times, there is still sufficient currency to give a contemporary relevance. This can be seen in both those texts whereby women are seen to invade the sanctity of male football and those which try to democratise and feminise the sport. Although women players continue to contest the masculinized definitions of football's image, their participation is much less in evidence in both sporting and representational terms and the chapter sought to question the discursive framing so often chosen by commentators, academic and others. During the period of this study, conflicting messages show how difficult it is to place women's football in the public consciousness. The debate about women's football as apparently progressive is one element. Nevertheless, the most tiresome and persistent problem at the level of the individual player, the club and the sport is that women's interest appears to lack legitimacy. This can be seen in a number of ways. The first quotation is taken from an elite player, the second from a coach, teacher and father.

Q What are your earliest memories of playing football?

A I always used to kick the ball about when I was young, so it started from there. I was at a fair once and there was a 'beat the keeper'. The manager from the local boys' team saw me kicking a ball and said, 'Do you want to come along and play football with us?' My Mum and Dad were like, 'You should be doing ballet'.[76]

Q There's not a stigma in society then that parents think their daughters are doing a masculine sport?

A No, a little bit in their head, but that is only in my head because there are so many young children playing together who have grown up exercising together. So it could be my neighbours' daughter. She is just a normal girl like everybody else. She could have grown up and said, 'I'm not playing football' because of this and that. It's not a problem for my daughter. She can do whatever she wants to do really. But, like I've said

[76] SS, England player, Liverpool 29 July 1999.

> before, I don't think football is a good sport for ladies because the knees and the body but if she wanted to play I wouldn't say no (sic).[77]

This suggested ideas of biological determinism are still sometimes expressed through a difference of playing standards which, in turn, supports common sense ideas of women's physical inferiority. The opportunities and rewards for exploring personal experience and local memory provide us with insights that defamiliarize the stereotype and the sport as a whole. The pattern of responses through out the thesis is indicative of both the production of culture within women's football and the culture of production: each player negotiates and interprets identities and gives them a specific linguistic and conceptual form at any one time. These verbalised definitions may concur, or be at odds with, the physical expression of the same idea when playing football and so are ever-changing and partial. The amalgamation of these subjectivities is like piecing together a jigsaw of the multiple identities women experience in and through football. It hardly helps in the transmission of memory that the picture is constantly changing but the construction of a range of memory has shown that the experience of women's football goes beyond the personal or the team to local and geographically diverse communities.

The thesis began with the question to what extent can the increase in playing numbers be said to have created a community and memory of women players? Significant further research remains to be done. Community and memory in women's football require more sophisticated treatment of different kinds of collectives and varying types of memorialization. For instance the development of the sport for men in England has assisted women's play, as is shown by the Stoke example in 1923 and this too could be examined further.[78] Also, oral history sources for this study have unfortunately been second-hand descriptions of the players from this era and, again, this could be developed by more projects which aim to collect memories of pre 1960s players.

It would seem that the present generation of women footballers would prefer to play rather than establish a common knowledge of the participants of the past. This made me wonder if gender politics belongs to the serious side of life from which players escape through football or whether the idea that there isn't anything *to* know influenced their judgement. It seemed also that enthusiasts were, by and large, content to remain at that level because in some fundamental ways the organisation of play works and has worked in facilitating and developing female play. At the

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[77] PH, A Licence Coach and Child Protection Tutor Training Seminar participant, Leicester 7 November 2000.

same time that I wanted to avoid reflexivity enhancing the status of my authorial voice, my conviction that there is a long-overdue need for the collection, presentation and memorialization of women players became stronger as I discussed memorabilia with participants. To reflect a history more varied than narratives which emphasise modernity or frivolity will allow was a starting point for this thesis and which could be extended beyond it. There is dramatic, informational and consequently political potential in piecing together historical evidence and personal memory made provisional and difficult to locate by the very nature of the topic. The memory would not consequently no become static but could become a departure in the sense of items being vivid in themselves and juxtaposed for effect, which, in turn, could encourage the contemporary participant to contribute to the collected memory.

Football is a clear example that, though some of the more serious feminist battles have been won, there are aspects of English society which are part of the daily round which remain practically ignored as issues of gender politics. In a recently published work, *Encyclopedia of British Football* the editors accepted my point that women's football should be integrated throughout in 'A similarly diffused approach...relevant issues are raised at suitable points throughout the book'.[79] This produced an entry on footballer's wives and an extended piece on women and girls football. It was not successful in meriting a more systematic treatment than a total of five indexed references to women or girls. At the National Football Museum there are three photographs of women players and a few of Lily Parr's medals. Potentially, the presentation of memorabilia and artefacts could help us to give definition to the development of the sport as continuous which has been outlined in this thesis as a different approach than in our understanding to date. However, given the difficulty of women's relationship with the football authorities, this would not be without problems. The Scottish FA's attempts to trace a history of women's football have met with difficulties from the two most famous stars, Rose Reilly and Edna Nellis. Both have only very recently chosen to help the SFA with the collection of memorabilia. So the representativeness of the collection in portraying women players to the general public is an issue to be resolved.

There are signs that women players recognised themselves as a group. Nevertheless, activism is relatively low on the agenda; most women cited 'fun' as their main reason for playing. A considerable degree of change is possible, but not inevitable in women's football as neo-

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[78] Discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.
[79] Richard Cox et al *Encyclopedia of British Football* Frank Cass 2002 p. x

traditionalist ideas about gender difference ally with commercial interests. The professional team at Fulham could be used to suggest that clubs with expansive ambitions may adopt women's football for publicity purposes. The public relations opportunities occasioned by the novel introduction of a female team primarily has assisted the host club and may, eventually, help the sport for women in England. Nevertheless, it currently depicts women's play as part of the ambient marketing of professional male clubs and so the prospect of sustainable growth in participation or increased female control of either women's football or football more generally is unlikely to come from this quarter.

Memory and tradition are fractured and incomplete for this sport, but the role of local support for players and teams appears to be crucial for women players. On the one hand women's football this century gives a view of how women's access to labour shaped their experience of leisure. This is not to say that there are no women players who worked exclusively in the home but that concepts of leisure for women away from the home allowed the identification of pools of women sufficiently large to band together to form a team. As we shall see from the next chapter, for a minority of women their enthusiasm for football shapes their choice of labour. For an even smaller elite football has been, for a time, both their leisure interest and their occupation. However, gendered discourse is important in understanding the resonances of different perspectives on the issue of female play. Dismissing women's contribution to football at all levels as worthy of oversight influences the perception of female players as relatively recent consumers of a trendy area of English popular culture. This chapter has set to turn this framework on its head and sought to pursue the interests of the women players, against the background of specialist, local and national media to show that one way of knowing about women's football is through everyday articles and events. The next chapter extends this to discuss the oral history of players as an interactive, co-operative collective memory.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ORAL HISTORY OF PLAYERS

1. Introduction

Having discussed aspects of the social memory of women's football in the previous chapter, this chapter looks at the meanings that women give their activities in the late 1990s. It sets down some markers to convey the variety of ideas, assumptions and practices in women's football. Primarily, the chapter looks at women defending their right to play at any level. Participation in football requires free time and voluntary control of that leisure. For a weekly training session and game, team members must be available at the same time, at a place they can afford to hire for at least two hours to put up goal nets, take them down and change clothing. Women are disproportionately represented in the casual workforce and on welfare in Britain, consequently, some women have limited time, leisure, money and access to transport. However, it would be wrong to assume that only middle-class women have access to football. More than one woman interviewed for this project had chosen an occupation because paid time off and regular hours of work allowed her to train and play at elite level.[1] Another elite player was sacked because she had taken time off work in order to meet her international commitments.[2] Beyond work and leisure, oral evidence has been used to examine how players define women's football culture, including their individual persona, such as nicknames, heroes, heroines and memories.

The increase in the number of participants and the lack of live support are fundamental. The scrapbooks of earlier players show fewer games played on non-affiliated pitches before the 1960s but larger crowds for these games. Three quarters of the 5,000 crowd at the England versus Germany World Cup qualifier in 1998 were children granted free entry.[3] It's hard to imagine a male England versus Germany game drawing similar support. During the four decades under study women's football has been adversely affected by the rise of interest in male football since the 1970s, particularly the cult of the obsessive fan. The women's football community as a whole has so understood itself in opposition to the mainstream that the majority of women in the cohort

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[1] GC, England player, Darsbury 8 March 1998.
[2] MM, England player, Darsbury 8 March 1998.
[3] England V Germany at Milwall 8 March 1998.

sampled here did not expect a significant change in status. This pessimistic outlook appeared to be at odds with the optimism with which women pursued playing and administrative tasks.

This chapter is the linchpin to the thesis as a whole because of the way in which women's play has been overlooked in the current historiography which focuses on the bureaucratisation of female football since 1993 as fundamental to the sport's development. Efforts to commemorate the players have been prone to conflict in Scotland, as has already been mentioned. In England this process has not yet begun. Scant acknowledgement for non-elite and elite players is an oversight this project addresses. The players were therefore asked how they see themselves, before moving on to enquire about their knowledge of the past, and their interest in actively collecting and constructing memory and identity.

The original questionnaires were circulated to non-elite teams based on geographical location as an attempt to define the object of study. The teams were chosen randomly from a complete league directory, from a range of regional leagues. From the outset, the undertaking was not an attempt to create a national history of women's football in England. Rather, the intention was firstly, to use the local data to test dominant narratives about women's football. Secondly, the examples would be significant in their own right as illustrations of communities of women players. Thirdly, the localised examples could provide evidence of wider trends. Finally, oral history and participant observation were essential because verbal communication and relatively rudimentary written sources characterise women's football to this day and so sets quantitative information in context.

Certain individuals have had considerable influence on the shape of women's football in England and the methods have attempted first, to open up the agenda by allowing players to offer opinions which are often contradictory views. As an example, whilst the thesis generally is critical of the FA as an administration, women working within it have provided information, within the bounds of their role in that organisation. Their willingness to engage with my questions is acknowledged throughout. Given the current administrative structure, credibility on the inside of the organisation and negotiation to effect change from within are clearly vital. So though WFA and FA personnel, academic researchers and librarians were adamant that no single accessible collection of documentation existed, attempts to corroborate this led me to other collections which included the *WFA News* and minutes of WFA meetings 1969-1990. In asking when the records were lost and by whom, the inaccurate and partial written evidence became as telling for

this study as the material itself might have been. The ephemeral nature of much of the activity is a central theme of this thesis. The existence of the information gap further reinforced my view of the relationship of the mass of players and the centralised administration. The woman player, or any other interested party eager to know more about the history of the game would not begin at the FA.

The research developed a range of networks. Notable individuals in each area suggested further regional and national connections. As Chair of a Regional League and player, active and retired administrators and players referred contacts. Coaching courses were particularly helpful to observe single sex and mixed games. In addition, academic researchers working in the area, women's sport conference delegates and FIFA personnel gave constructive advice and courteous introductions. This is worth outlining in some detail because the subject links to other aspects of historical research such as sports history, leisure history and women's history, but also to research more often perceived to lie in the field of cultural analysis. The term 'women's football' holds different meaning for each of the groups mentioned above hence the diverse, contradictory and unique interpretations in this thesis. Like a patchwork, the investigation attempts to see the relationship of each part to the whole, at the same time as allowing for the individuality of each element to remain clear.

2. Issues Arising from the Research Methods

The interviews were open at first in order to encourage the respondents to reply in the manner that they felt to be most suitable. However, some players and coaches of different backgrounds and ages were reticent to talk about their experiences in this form and preferred to be asked specific questions. Most notably those who had associations with the elite camps were guarded in their comments concerning the FA but freely spoke about their own career prior to England selection. With this group of players, obtaining information can be difficult in part because they are most frequently interviewed by the media and so have added calls on their time. Some young interviewees preferred to have another family member present. In some cases access to individuals was fortuitous, or the result of a generous invitation. For example, to England training camps, the Women's World Cup in Los Angeles in 1999 and to meet Women's USA personnel in New York 2001. When comparing the results, the different attitudes of the US National Team and England players were clearly evident. The English players appeared surprised that their thoughts

would be of interest. In contrast the US National Team appeared as happy to address a media conference as to play in front of 90,000 fans.

In terms of the primary contact, after an initial letter and questionnaire, requests for interview were successful with all but one elderly player and one relative of a player. The questionnaires were revised because they were led more by my interest than the values that were important to the players. The responses to the initial surveys indicated a lack of interest in feminism particularly, politics generally and also a lack of interest in professional football.

It was noticeable that each player had a vivid narrative about either their first experience of playing football and retold this with confidence. This story often linked personal, family and community life and combined explanation and justification of the player's interest in the sport. The following are representative answers to the question, 'What are your earliest memories of playing football?'

> I played with my father when I was about eight. He used to take me to a local football field and taught me different tricks and skills.[4]
> [In the] school playing ground, kicking tennis ball around at break times.[5]
> About five [years old] in infant school – with lads at break times...Wearing a shirt too big for me, scoring a goal and my team mobbing me.[6]

Older siblings and relatives are often both the first opponents and coaches and interviewees were customarily amused by their early recollections. When the move was made from prepubescent, usually mixed, recreational football to structured school or junior leagues, two main types of account developed. Over half of the respondents to the question 'Was there a time you stopped playing?' answered that there had not been an interruption in their playing career. The following replies explained temporary disruptions.

> Yes. School would no longer allow competitive play between girls and boys. (I did, however, continue to play outside school).[7]
> Yes – when I was about eleven as I could not play for my school team or boys' teams and there was not too many girls' clubs around.[8]

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[4] Elite questionnaire 8.
[5] Non-elite questionnaire 14.
[6] GB, Doncaster Belles player, Newark 24 May 2000.
[7] Non-elite questionnaire 6.
[8] Non-elite questionnaire 11.

> Yes. I stopped playing seven years ago for one year as I made a trip from Australia and lived in England for twelve months. As we didn't have a car, I was unable to get to/from training and games so I stopped playing while I lived in England.[9]

In contrast to the early memories, elite and non-elite players rarely spoke about life away from football. They did refer to circumstances that affected their play directly such as occupational hours or family structure. Wherever possible, interviews took place in the players' home. In only one male case where there was a significant history of professional football in the family were the public rooms decorated with football memorabilia.[10] Testimonies of family members gave a perspective on how the family see themselves in relation to the player's sporting career. For example, an elite player's mother felt that her daughter was right to choose football only after she had been picked for international duty. Mother and daughter negotiated the initial resistance and then support of the family.

> Me and my brother would kick about in the back garden for a laugh and mum would try to get me to go to dancing classes and girl's things like that...but he was into running more than football and I only ever wanted to play football. So I got better than him.[11]

Another player cited her family's disapproval of her choice of sport and part time career as a reason for moving away. Pursuing the sport of her choice was a sign of independence.

> Yes, my family thought it wasn't normal...even after breaking into the National and Olympic side. Frustrated – burnt out. [For] one and a half years... when I first came back to England I didn't speak to them.[12]

Few interviews have been conducted about women football players' lives and Gail Newsham's taped conversations are important to a collection of 'history from below', which might otherwise be lost.[13] In analysing the interviews and questionnaires the aim is to indicate areas of consensus and opposition in the way that players see and understand what they do. Portelli has indicated that oral history tells us less about the event as such than its meaning.[14] There was also a tendency for group members to select responses from a particular cultural repertoire according to a given

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[9] Elite questionnaire 13.
[10] Peter Bridgett Stoke 19 July 1999.
[11] TT, England player 18 years old , Adelphi Hotel Liverpool 12 July 1999.
[12] NN, player and England trialist (dual nationality), Darsbury 8 March 1998.
[13] Gail Newsham *In a League of Their Own* London: Scarlet 1998 is interesting for its style as the narrative is heavily influenced by the phrases and inflections of the interviewees.

context (field, in Bourdieu's terms).[15] Applied to women's football, the stories have begun to form clear patterns. The question, 'Do you regard women's football as a separate sport to men's football, as a related sport or the same sport?' prompted responses including:

> It is the same sport but with different support.[16]
> Separate, men's is too much money involved now.[17]
> Related due to different standards.[18]
> Its just the same only more competitive.[19]
> Separate, because not many male teams actually come into contact with the women and don't do anything for the female game.[20]
> I class it as the same game as it has the same rules. I think though men's and women's football is played in two different styles.[21]

The range proposed the difficulty of defining the object of study in 'women's football' and demonstrates constant mediation with the term. Even where players feel it to be the same sport, some degree of differentiation is often part of the explanation.

Another source, useful in its own right and also in prompting conversation, was the scrapbook. In many cases the old and the young have taken an active part in documenting their career and remembering it. This material might be treated in different ways; as an exploration of age and identity in sport, say. One might begin from the premise that older players organise their memories in an effort to recoup a sense of their youth and younger players project and create a sense of self and future in their journals. Though not explored as an issue of age here, memorabilia supplements the oral testimony. This provided a counterbalance to the view of players as pragmatists. Compilation of the scrapbook appeared to be a time and space for reflection and told me little things about the players. Joan Whalley's meticulous hand-written record of goals scored sits alongside newspaper cuttings of each game. Joan's tally is invariably last on each list, even if she scored most goals.

Though not in my original plan, issues of financial management unavoidably affected the research process. The FA ban of 1921 included an accusation that a disproportionate amount the charitable funds raised by women's teams had been claimed as expenses. It was also suggested

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[14] Alessandro Portelli 'The Peculiarities of Oral History' *History Workshop Journal* Vol.12 Autumn 1981 p.99.
[15] Pierre Bourdieu *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* London: Routledge 1986 p.20.
[16] Elite questionnaire 4.
[17] Non-elite questionnaire 7.
[18] Elite questionnaire 10.
[19] Non-elite questionnaire 12.
[20] Non-elite questionnaire 14.
[21] Elite questionnaire 15.

that not all the remaining money went to charity, an allegation refuted by the players.[22] This made contacting the relatives of the, Dick, Kerr Ladies manager, Mr Frankland, now deceased, a diplomatic exercise. They did not reply to my enquiries. In a more recent example, a treasurer defrauded a local league of thousands of pounds. This left the officers in a precarious position, not least because the sponsor UNISON (the public worker's union) threatened to withdraw financial support. It became clear that women's football leagues are one of many unregulated bodies in which individuals can have access to several thousand pounds with little accountability. It's not necessary to expand on this point beyond indicating that, for some, sport is not a social activity so much as for personal economic gain.

The difficulty of locating the thesis within a specific research context is one that other researchers who have taken a thematic approach to the study of women's football have negotiated: "Is it 'women's history', 'sports history', 'national history', or 'local history'"?[23] In considering oral history accounts it matters that history is pursued within a social context and with political implications. In this, the approach was particularly influenced by Paul Thompson's description:

> The richest possibilities for oral history lie within the development of a more socially conscious and democratic history... in preserving the full richness and value of tradition.[24]

For example, many of the players disagreed with my ideas concerning mixed games at competitive level. This is not a case of false consciousness on their part or an agreement with FA policy. Frequently it was a defence of a female space, to encourage girls and other women to play whatever their ability. The question 'FA policy prevents girls and boys playing competitively together after age eleven. Do you agree with this line, and is this the right age?' produced some highly personal and some more objective answers.

> I don't think boys and girls should play together. But training is a good idea as they learn from each other.[25]
> Yes, because I know from karate competitions boys are physically a lot stronger, but in training the aggression can be controlled.[26]
> I agree as boys are physically stronger than girls so it would be in the girls' and boys' interests. I think the age is right as well.[27]

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[22] Gail Newsham *In A League of their Own* p.80.
[23] Alethea Melling *Ladies' Football: Gender and the Socialisation of Women Football Players in Lancashire 1916-1960* unpublished PhD thesis University of Central Lancashire November 1999 p.21.
[24] Paul Thompson *The Voice Of The Past: Oral History* 3rd Edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000 Preface.
[25] Elite questionnaire 3.
[26] Elite questionnaire 8.

Mixed competitive football is resisted by some women within women's football as a protection of a female domain. They argue that mixed sport would inevitably be organised along the same lines as male football and then there would be no room for women or girls.[28] This topic will continue to be contentious and open to change. During the course of this study the Scottish FA has recently raised the age of mixed competition to fifteen.[29] Some of the girls and women supported this idea in answer to the question posed above.

> I think it should be optional for people like me who, at age ten, would have liked to play for a team.[30]
> I think girls and boys should be able to play competitively until senior level if they wanted to.[31]
> I disagree. Some boys are better because they are given encouragement at a younger age. Boys/girls should be treated the same.[32]
> Disagree, because we are just as strong and good as boys/men.[33]

More of the elite players disagreed with this question than agreed, and a few suggested age limits between 12 and 15, while others replied:

> If the girl is good enough, she should be able to stay in the boys' league as long as she can compete at the same level.[34]

My concern was to reciprocate information in order to make transparent the participants' place within the research process. The intention was to build up a history of players' memories and interpretations. Though individuals answered questions with sincerity, some of their responses were inevitably self-censored or selected memories about why they did one thing or another. They may also have forgotten why they made early choices or unpleasant experiences. The tape recorder was frequently an inhibiting factor and contributors became more fluent when it was turned off. Consequently it was used less often as the research progressed.

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[27] Non-elite questionnaire 10.
[28] An argument used by the WFA in supporting the ruling against Theresa Bennet, who wished to play in a mixed team in 1978 *WFA News* November 1978 p. 4 referred to in more detail in Chapter Four.
[29] Sheila Begbie, Head of Women's Football Scottish FA, personal communication 10 June 2001.
[30] Elite questionnaire 15.
[31] Non-elite questionnaire 20.
[32] Non-elite questionnaire 24.
[33] Elite questionnaire 17.
[34] Elite questionnaire 5.

In summary, through oral history interviews specific themes about women's participation were highlighted which impact on gender identity but are not peculiar to female experience. For example Highfield Rangers is a club proud of its black origin but is not exclusively for black players and I could not find any exclusively black or Asian teams. When visiting the Centres of Excellence, black and Asian players were visible as a significant minority, especially in London, Leicester, Nottingham and Coventry. In Sheila Rollinson's collection, photographs from 1979-1986 show her team with one black and one Asian player playing against other teams with no more than two black or Asian players during the course of several seasons, though obviously such methods of observation are limited, as are the definitions of racial characteristics themselves.

Participant observation suggested disparity between views of race held by FA officials and those working with young people. For example, no mention was made at the *Kick it Out* Conference held in 1998 about the role of girls' or women's football as this initiative focussed primarily on non white professional players in spite of the keynote speech delivered by black female journalist, Emma Linsey.[35] In another instance, a FA Regional Director suggested to Leicester City Council Sports Development Officers that a black or Asian side should be formed to promote girls' football.[36] This was resisted and the integration of black and Asian players with other races continued in city teams. The FA adapted the policy to school-based activity in predominantly black or Asian areas such as Tower Hamlets and Morpeth in mixed race teams.[37] The high profile of England Internationals Brenda Sampare and Hope Powell since the 1970s and Rachel Yankey in the 1990s indicates that some black and Asian players are able to reach elite positions but further research could explore the extent to which race and ethnicity shape experiences. To extend the study, a variety of ethnic and racial groups would have to be the focus rather than use outmoded white and non-white models of classification.

Lesbian identity was another example of a complex and resisted categorisation. Jayne Caudwell suggests in her work on the butch stereotype that the image is problematic for straight and gay women because it reinforces ideas of bigness with masculinity:

> The concept of "girlie feminines" suggests a visual strategy to combat the seemingly ubiquitous butch image...the account illustrates the tensions that exist

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[35] Participant observation at *Keep Racism Out of Football Conference* Reading 4 November 1997 Emma Lindsey is a freelance sports and features writer. .
[36] Participant observation at meeting for Active Sports Development Group Filbert Street Leicester 13 May and 20 July 2000.
[37] 'Developing Asian Girls' Football' *On the Ball* May 2001.

> for heterosexual women, in particular, the ways in which heterosexual women deal with the common assumptions that all players are lesbian.[38]

In addition to Planet Barcelona already mentioned, another team led by 'Jock' also played with the lesbian stereotype. Several of the team completed questionnaires and agreed to be interviewed. After playing against the team on a number of occasions I was aware of their tactic of intimidating opposition players by making verbal comments and physical contact. This produced a good deal of humour on both sides at post-match social gatherings but it was not until interviewing the players that it became clear that this strategy was employed week in, week out by some players and encouraged by male and female supporters. The team may be playing on the homophobic fears of the opposition but it would be unwise to be too prescriptive. Jock's assertion, that it was a 'laugh' did little to further my understanding.[39]

Players used a range of strategies at different moments to negotiate roles. For example, I spent four years with the same club of twenty-five women of which four were openly gay players. Some of these players had relationships within the team. Their behaviour included apparently relaxed expressions of sexuality such as touching and kissing in the company of the team. From England trials to single day tournaments this conduct was no more commented upon than young heterosexual couples behaving in the same way. It was disconcerting, therefore, that younger team members used the word 'gay' to deride objects, ideas and people. Whether using this term reflected a wish to assert heterosexual identity, was school slang or with homophobic undertones to criticise behaviour that young women felt threatened by, requires more analysis. There was considerable tension in the team, some relating to this issue. Because of this it would have been insensitive to explore the use of the word with the team in an open way.

Finally, several participant observation activities gave me a sense of how younger players spoke about the game. It seemed less appropriate to extract written responses. So by coaching and working with the players it was possible to observe their conduct whilst also assisting with their development. At primary level, up to age eleven, the group included boys and girls. After two weeks the teacher agreed to mix girls and boys at under-nine. By the tenth week the teacher asked me to coach boys only, selected the girls out and had a lunchtime supervisor, 'a dinner lady', coach them. This provided an opportunity to discuss with the girls what they thought of such

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[38] Jayne Caudwell Women's Football in the United Kingdom : Theorising Gender and Unpacking the Butch Lesbian Image *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* Vol.23 No.4 November 1999 p.399.
[39] 'Jock' Hemsworth 18 March 1999.

segregation. The second cohort were drawn from across the Leicestershire county to a once a week, two hour coaching session banded by age from under 10 and under 12 to under 14. As one of eight coaches at this female-only centre of development, my contact with the players lasted for two years. Elite players at the Notts County Centre of Excellence for girls provided me with their views in an environment where young women's play is highly organised, managed and monitored.

During the research process individuals I met not because of this study, but to whom I had mentioned the topic, sent me items, for example a *Coventry Evening Telegraph* article from 1989.[40] These casual observers became intrigued by the possibility of a link between their local area and the phenomenon of women's football as a spectator sport. Access to the private material which enabled me to trace football careers usually required personal introduction and a willingness to travel to the home of the possessor. One purpose in pursuing these contacts has been to evaluate the extent to which the collector thought the material to be historically valuable. The second was to begin to collect a range of materials for subsequent dissemination to players and a wider audience.

During the first interviews, it became apparent that the collectors were understandably unwilling to part with original material. Each person was then revisited to scan items into a laptop computer so that each image could be recorded and edited. However, in some cases, for example Joan Whalley's scrapbook, items were too fragile to scan. By photographing each of the pages, producing two sets of enlarged prints and returning one to the owner of the scrapbook, it was possible to record and produce a usable resource. The effect of using these methods has been not just to produce a collection of memorabilia but to analyse the constructed interpretations of the past. The array has made clear that the original aim of appreciating women's football in England was too large. The diversity of the data made it more challenging to detect patterns whilst doing justice to regional, cultural and individual differences. So although the invisibility of the collectors at the outset caused some difficulties and delays, by the end of the research the network of contacts had developed to the extent that it provided an unexpected amount of detail.

The disparate nature of the collections and the need to form a relationship with each of the holders made the process slow and labour-intensive. Often the first visit would be to establish a genuine interest in both the material and the subject matter. The majority of the conversation

established our shared knowledge of players, administrators and issues surrounding the sport. The collector was then contacted again and asked for an extended interview and permission to see and copy material. Talking through documentation with collectors was useful, especially in examining the establishment of the WFA through written minutes. The two types of source revealed a difference; the former suggested minutes being produced as working documents arising from the administrative needs of the leagues and the latter, minutes produced with an eye to posterity.

With more time it would have been possible to extend the work done on oral history to consider oral tradition. That is, to go beyond questions about the knowledge and importance of cultural artefacts relating to the past for the players of today, to an analysis of the traditions and narratives of those past players over generations. For example, following her expulsion from Scottish women's football, Rose Reilly successfully played another ten years professionally in Italy and became the only player on the board of directors at Trani, earning around £1000 a month plus sponsorship and free accommodation in 1984.[41] It would be interesting to gather information about how that was viewed by the other players, by the board members and her relatives. Generations will have told the stories of the original players to others who may still be active in football today. For example, Winnie Bourke, daughter of Alice Mills who emigrated to the United States in 1923 as mentioned in Chapter Two. Winnie's own high school essay about women's football, the eulogy at her mother's funeral, *The Pawtucket Times* newspaper articles from the original Dick, Kerr tour provide examples of how the events have been handed down in the print and orally. Winnie is herself now 80 years old and has seven grandchildren, one of whom plays football. The émigré narrative of her mother's hard work, determination and success are a family tradition, in which football is an example of her mother's 'doing' nature and willingness to take an opportunity if offered.[42] Unfortunately, my attempts to contact the relatives of players who remained in England from this era have been less successful.

In turning now to the interviews that the project did complete, the four major prompts were patterns of practice; the structural conditions of playing; the FA era and the private lives of

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[40] Hear and There 'Team of the Twenties' *Coventry Evening Telegraph* 20 November 1989.
[41] Ruth Wishart 'Woman on the wing with a prayer of stardom' *Saturday Post* 8 December 1984.
[42] Winnie Bourke High school essay, newspaper cuttings and eulogy provided by personal communication 30 June 2000.

players. It is to this 'collective amnesia' about the past and current practices in women's football that this chapter now turns.[43]

3. The Analysis of Oral History Sources

This component begins with a discussion of play and fun, to reflect players' frequent use of these terms during the study. Since the thesis discusses the contentious nature of women's participation, it seemed that players' sense of enjoyment required an examination of how 'play' and 'fun' interact. Obviously the terms are sufficiently loose to reflect individual difference as well as commonality. *Homo ludens*, man the player, is a familiar concept in the historiography of sport, particularly the biological and psychological motives behind the apparently unmotivated, spontaneous play of animals and humankind. Zeigler, Guttman and other theorists have explored this relationship between play and games.[44] They have argued that most play is regulated and rule bound. Specifically for this study, playing at or in women's football involves playful order.

> To play a game is to attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs (prelusory goal), using only means permitted by rules (lusory means), where the rules prohibit use of more efficient in favour of less efficient means (constitutive rules) and where such rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity (lusory attitude).[45]

In sporting terms whether the players feel that winning the contest is the important element or whether participation is about self-expression, for all but a tiny minority the activity remains a decidedly amateur affair. This led to questions about how players perceive their team and their personal contribution to it. The answers to the question, 'How would you describe your team?' combine competition and collaboration.

> Excellent. We get along well, we can play good football and we all have fun.[46]
> Fun, friendly and always willing to try, we are all friends and everyone helps each other.[47]
> A hard working and young team, with fun and friendship along the way.[48]

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[43] Sheila Johansson "Herstory' as history: a new field or another fad?' in Berenice Carroll (ed.) *Liberating Women's History* Illinois University Press 1976 p.427.
[44] Earle Zeigler *Sport and Physical Education: Past, Present, Future* Illinois: Stipes 1990; Allen Guttman et al. (eds.) *International Encyclopedia of Women and Sports* New York London: Macmillan 2001.
[45] Bernard Suits 'The Elements of Sport' in Robert G Osterhoudt (ed.) *The Philosophy of Sport: A Collection of Original Essays*, Springfield, Illinois: Thomas 1973 p.55.
[46] KC, Doncaster Belles player, Doncaster 11 August 1998.
[47] Non-elite questionnaire 7.
[48] Elite questionnaire 10.

> I see my team as friendly, fun to play with and I think I have very talented players playing around me in my team (sic).[49]

However beyond this connected pleasure in play, examples from elite and non-elite players demonstrate that, for some, the enjoyment is of a more serious kind.

> We are all very close, and you would not see this in any other club. You've got to be something special to be a Belle. Players have come and gone after a season, whereas some will come and stay forever and they'll not go and play for anyone else. It's more than a camaraderie, you feel like you belong to something, it's not just a football team.[50]

> Like a family – we all stick together. If someone is having a bad game then we all try to lift that person. You can talk to any of your mates with anything and the atmosphere is first class. All the squads mix. It's not them here and them over there. We are all as one and I don't think you'll see that at any other club in the country.[51]

The expression of closeness and similarity in clubs formed primarily to play a sport is remarkable. Though several players also participated in individual sports they expanded upon teamwork in interview. That the club becomes something larger than the sporting endeavour is one the one hand significant and on the other perhaps less surprising if one considers that in order to play football the participants must spend hours together. How do players make time to play?

This emerged as a clear difference between elite and non-elite players as expressive of their playing identity. At the point of change from recreational to elite performer a conscious decision to the achievement of athletic excellence has to be made. The degree to which players specialised was a correlation of this dedication to one sport. For example, in the non-elite questionnaires the response to the question 'What other sports do you play?' includes a significantly wider range of activities than for elite players. Team sports such as hockey, netball and basketball feature strongly across both groups, as do activities with a tradition of female participation such as swimming.

Table 5.1 Other Sports Played by Elite Women Football Players

WHAT OTHER SPORTS DO YOU PLAY?		**TOTAL**
Hockey	✓ ✓ ✓	3
Badminton	✓ ✓	2

[49] Non-elite questionnaire 12.
[50] BK Doncaster Belles player, Doncaster 11 August 1998.
[51] VR Doncaster Belles player, Doncaster 11 August 1998.

Basketball	✓ ✓	2
Tennis	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	6
Squash	✓	1
Netball	✓	1
Cycling	✓ ✓	2
Weightlifting	✓	1
Running	✓	1
Rugby	✓ ✓ ✓	3
Cricket	✓	1

Source: Elite Questionnaires issued by Jean Williams 1998-2000

Table 5.2 Other Sports Played by Non-Elite Women Football Players

WHAT OTHER SPORTS DO YOU PLAY?		**TOTAL**
Hockey	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	11
Squash	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	4
Badminton	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	8
Swimming	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	8
Basketball	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	8
Tennis	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	4
Cricket	✓ ✓ ✓	3
Athletics	✓	1
Aerobics	✓	1
Rounders	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	4
Scuba Diving	✓	1
Trampoline	✓	1
Horse Riding	✓	1
Rugby	✓ ✓	2
Karate	✓	1
Netball	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	7
Shot Putt	✓	1
Judo	✓	1
Running	✓ ✓	2
Golf	✓	1
Weight Lifting	✓	1
Tae Kwon Do	✓	1
Cycling	✓	1

Source: Non-elite Questionnaires issued by Jean Williams 1998-2000

Several international and elite players suggested that participation in other sport is usually to assist with fitness or agility for football and, in turn, this posed the question whether other sports could be considered alternatives to football or as part of a sporty lifestyle. However, though it

was difficult to ascertain the extent to which football attracted women players who may not have participated in other sports, one interview with an elite player struck me as particularly expressive in describing time related to football activities.

> Friday night I go out and have a drink with my mates and we're talking about the match Sunday...who it will be [against]...what we'll do and having a laugh. Saturday I'm thinking about it and it's great because it's the weekend but I want the time to go quick (sic) so it's Sunday. I'll get my stuff ready and I won't go out ...I'll eat pasta and go to bed early but I don't sleep easily because I can see myself playing and hopefully scoring. (laughs)[52]

The interview carries on in this way with the player describing how her experience of each day of the week relates to the Sunday game. For example, Monday involves a dissection of the previous day's action and physical recovery; Tuesday is a club training night involving nutritional preparation and organisation of time and travel; Wednesday is for personal training; Thursday a club training night and Friday some personal training followed by socialising. In addition to the time spent in physical preparation, the interviewee spent a considerable amount of time talking and thinking about football. For some women in terms of commitment, time and focus of effort, football is central to their leisure and influences other recreation. To develop this line of research further, analyses of players' use of time at different levels of the sport could be developed. For example, players at Centres of Excellence are not just privileged by their youth and the technical resources available. Like the young munitionettes in the First World War, many of these players have the time to devote to improving their game.

So this isn't a technical analysis but an examination of the interplay of the play spirit in regulated competition. Women players are clearly drawn to the more rigorous elements of football, including an important measure of physical and intellectual skill. Part of the attraction is that football combines physical skill with judgement and elements of chance. Strategy and risk are mentioned repeatedly in women's narratives about football. Physical participation is fun but it is also an education, as is indicated by these non-elite responses to the question 'In your own words describe how you see your team'.

> Improving with every game. We are all very committed.[53]
> A young team eager to learn, still committed whatever [the] result.[54]
> As a young side which is learning and progressing all the time.[55]

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[52] JS, player, Southampton 18 May 1999.
[53] Non elite questionnire 36.
[54] Non-elite questionnaire 42.
[55] Non-elite questionnaire 44.

> Good potential if we can keep going and keep playing as a team.[56]

Women football players draw on a theme of 'improving' as they learn how to play the game in a gender segregated team sport.

> In most teams I have played the women were serious and committed about their football.[57]
> A team which plays good football, will not lower themselves to the 'hit and run' tactics of other teams. Friends.[58]

The intellectual challenge is part of the fun. The issue of women's relationship to football knowledge is elaborated in greater detail in the following chapter and therefore the focus here will be on the players' views of themselves. Conceptual engagement with the tactics and technical aspects of the sport are another dimension of women's involvement, like time spent thinking about and talking about football, that make the concept of participant more complex. If the cerebral and emotional elements of partaking in the sport at regular competitive level are taken into account, the players' connection is, at times, intense.

However, this use of language also reflects the internalisation of the necessity of patronage in the sport more generally and recognises the split between player and coach. As a student of the game, the subservient position of the players is a means of obtaining licence to play. In connection with the idea of fun, education and play the terms used by non-elite players conveyed eagerness.

> Young, committed, inexperienced and enthusiastic.[59]
> A group of girls who love football, who want to show anyone willing to watch that women can play football.[60]
> A bunch of enthusiastic girls out to play a good game.[61]
> Not that serious, or too bothered about whether they win or lose, but is quite a good team spirit – particularly off the pitch.[62]

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[56] Non-elite questionnaire 49.
[57] Non-elite questionnaire 25.
[58] Non-elite questionnaire 32.
[59] Non-elite questionnaire 15.
[60] Non-elite questionnaire 17.
[61] Non-elite questionnaire 26.
[62] Non-elite questionnaire 35.

In part this emphasis on willingness conveys the seriousness with which the players approach their activities but it also appears to be defensive of women's right to play, as skill is hardly mentioned at all in any of the responses. Ebullience, verve and sheer force of will meanwhile are clearly evident.

The young girls across the four clusters mentioned above had a broader repertoire of responses to this line of questioning. Some played because they were good at football and liked to confirm their ability. Especially noticeable in the Centre of Excellence and County groups, were girls who translated school behaviours to the formal coaching situations and in informal socialisation. Some players would demonstrate anti-authority and anti-learning strategies that seemed out of place in what was meant to be a relaxed environment. This appeared to be defensive, as players wanted to appear unwilling to learn, or to admit lack of ability in any area. In response to the question, 'In your own words describe how you see your team', the responses included:

> High spirited, determined, fun loving, fair, following the motto: 'All for one and one for all!'[63]
> A friendly team, with a good atmosphere and we have the greatest parents to go with it.[64]
> Young, passing side, friendly, good, not tough enough, needs some aggression, close-knit teams – all friends with each other.[65]

Though very positive, this type of reaction appeared to be very different to women who volunteer their keenness to learn. While adolescent self-consciousness has a part to play, some girls in these centres obviously feel the burden of judgement to weigh heavily.

Another clear finding was that men had frequently been instrumental in forming, coaching, managing and assisting women's teams in otherwise ancillary or support roles, from organising fund raising events to providing transport. In extension the roles of men in promoting women's sport, though not the remit of this study, would be an area for future exploration, particularly masculinities in women's football. Additionally, study of the role of mixed sport in forming the perception of boys of girls sporting ability would also be valuable.

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[63] PB, Centre of Excellence player aged 14, Notts County 16 May 2000.
[64] FA, Centre of Excellence player aged 14, Notts County 16 May 2000.
[65] JY, Centre of Excellence player aged 14, Notts County 16 May 2000.

In the initial questionnaires respondents were asked to define why women generally played football and why specifically *they* played football. The general use of the term 'fun' was considerably refined by the responses to the second prompt. One of the functions of football for women was social. To broadly categorise the responses in my own words, these include improving physical health and fitness; as a physical release; as a means of controlled risk taking; as a mode of aesthetic expression and as a context for self discipline. The non-elite players emphasised the first two points more specifically and the elite players the last three, and so I have organised the points as a list that could be developed into a continuum. To suggest that all participants go through the same stages or that non-elite players *per se* do not feel they are expressing themselves is not the intention. Broadly though, with greater confidence comes a sense of oneself as performer and with increased feelings of skill comes improved self-assurance. Socialising through sport entailed both the competitive and the informally structured nature of participation. The next section highlights the player free to work at playing and therefore identify with the product of one's work, in this case athletic performance. The player is able to simultaneously present themselves to themselves and to others through this display.

The four broad prompts used to encourage players to discuss their sense of a playing persona included nicknames; heroes and heroines; personal memories of football and involvement in commercialised aspects of the sport. It appears that personal factors are the primary motivator for many women football players rather than extrinsic motivation (such as the dominance of others). Nevertheless the sense of sharing values in a group was also critical as those motivated entirely by intrinsic motivation could have chosen an individual or solitary sport. Very few players spoke of the need to win, but several liked to feel that they were personally excellent, especially the elite participants. However, this inmost enjoyment takes place in a social setting, in a team environment. So another element of playing identity is the demonstration of one's play to team-mates. Consequently, a team identity based on a playing identity is also developed. A nickname or given name was a starting point as it has to be both accepted by the player and used by the team members, as such, it represents a conscious decision to 'play' in the sense of investing one's playing persona with identity.

Simmel with reference to the connections between sociability, 'social games' and play wrote:

> In the game, they lead their own lives; they are propelled exclusively by their own attraction. The more profound, double sense of 'social game' is that not only

> is the game played in a society (as its external medium) but that, with its help, people actually 'play' society.[66]

Since a key theme of the research was the representation of women players, participants were asked about how their playing personality was represented in language. Other academics have chosen to interpret a sense of self as body image and confidence. The focus of a cross national survey undertaken by Sheila Scraton, Kari Fasting et al asked questions about body shape and female athletes feelings about their bodies.[67] The findings from 240 athletes drawn from gymnastics, soccer and two other sports across four countries, suggested that football players experienced less conflict about body composition than, say, gymnasts who felt compelled to leanness. The authors also suggest such a relative freedom may not mean that women players are contesting the power relations inherent in male and female appropriate sport and it was this element that was particularly pertinent for this study.

Indeed, for some women players in this project overtly macho behaviour was perceived as a tomboyish characteristic in which the participant was both representing their juvenile 'play' side and masculine traits. Especially with regard to tackles and discipline on the field, being like a man is used by some players to suggest their power and, by extension, the dominance of men in the sport. As one player put it, 'My nickname is Scud, you can feel me but you won't hear me coming' and another, 'They call me Butch. I'm a strong player. I'm not scared of tackles'.[68] This may not be masculine identification however, but 'the fear of appearing female, or effeminate...unlike narcissism, femiphobia is a gender-negative construction, in being a barometer of what not to be'.[69] Acting out is one feature of this. The 'ladette' and the 'she bloke' are perceived to be both a liberation from femininity and a form of male emulation.

Puberty was, for some, a point at which they were made aware of the link between female adulthood and football as an inappropriate activity. In answer to the question, 'Is there a time you stopped playing football?' responses tended to emphasise eleven to fourteen as a key stage.

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[66] George Simmel *Conflict and The Web of Group Affiliations* KH Wolff and R Bendix trans. New York: The Free Press 1955 p.50.
[67] Kari Fasting et al 'Women Playing Soccer – Experiences from Europe' *ICSSPE Bulletin* No. 25 Berlin 1998 pp.38-39
[68] 'Scud' and 'Butch' Hemsworth 18 March 1999.
[69] Alan Klein *Little Big Men: Bodybuilding Subculture and Gender Construction* Albany: State University of New York Press 1993 p.270.

> Between eleven years old to fourteen years old, there were no girls' teams around and the FA would not let me play with the boys.[70]
> Yes – stopped playing for school team in junior school. They said girls couldn't play 'cause had no changing facilities. Couldn't play in boys' team.[71]
> Yes. School would no longer allow competitive play between girls and boys. (I did, however, continue to play outside school).[72]

These players obviously did continue to play at a later date. As one young player put it, 'I have been playing now since I was six (eleven years in total) and I think since I started the game has increased rapidly'.[73] Football is something she has participated in since she was young so the early teens are not a time of conflict for all.

The majority of nicknames do not support the adoption of stereotypically male traits as characteristics of women's football culture. The names included contractions (Harj for Harjit, Staff for Stafford, Tommy for Tomlinson), features of play (Skip for a forward, Hedge for a sweeper) or a physical feature (Red, Smurf). Finally such names should be understood in relation to the game, rules prevent players from shouting 'My ball' but a one or two syllable title is a necessity for speed and accuracy in fending off a tackle, calling for a pass or claiming possession.

All but three of the club level participants cited a male hero, though all of the elite players were able to name at least one. There was an emphasis on flair players among elite and non-elite players (Ginola, Junhinio, Giggs, Asprilla, Kinkladze). In comparison half the non-elite players could not name a female player as heroine. Five nominated their team captain, two themselves, three other players in their team, two Gill Coulthard, two Marianne Spacey and one Kelly Smith. The elite players were all able to name a heroine, including Mia Hamm, Kelly Smith and Kerry Walker (who played professionally in Italy as well as for England) which is suggestive of their awareness of the national and international developments in the game.

The impression of the team as a source of friendship and fun was intensified when the majority of participants reported that they had played for a single club. Continued improvement and learning the game within a supportive environment was clear rather than moving clubs to improve levels of skill. Camaraderie of exercise in a team context is undoubtedly part of the enjoyment for many individual women football players today. When asked about their participation in more than one

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[70] Non-elite questionnaire 15.
[71] Non-elite questionnaire 32.
[72] Non-elite questionnaire 46.
[73] NH, England trialist, Warwick University 28 June 2000.

club, respondents gave reasons ranging from moving house, to playing in school and County sides, to personal differences. A surprising finding to emerge was that, though all the respondents took part in other organised forms of sport, some of the coaches had not played for football teams when they were younger. Of those that agreed to an interview, all were active players or currently coaching but not necessarily girls' or women's teams. When asked 'What's your earliest memory of playing football?' the answers varied considerably.

> Only most recently – last two years helping my two sons who played at youth level.[74]
> Playing on the field during lunchtimes with the lads at senior school.[75]
> Trying to get my mother to play, her kicking the ball and hitting me in the face, I was about four or five.[76]
> At about seven or eight years old in the summer holidays playing on the primary school pitch.[77]

Across all interviews having parents who expressed opposing views to participation was not in itself a barrier but having male friends who accepted girls' participation was a key element in women's play. Several spoke of being the only girl in a playing group but with different level of consciousness; some enjoyed the feeling of honorary status and a perception of freedom, some appeared surprised by the question. Many indicated that football was one of many games; only a single participant indicated that from an early age it was her one ambition to be a professional footballer.[78]

The role of sport in family life in general elicited differing responses with some very active parents and some less so. In answer to the question, 'Does any one come along to support you at games?' responses included:

> Yes, my father attends every training session, my mother attends occasionally, but both of them attend every match I play.[79]
> Father/mother never miss a match, and grandma and sister come along. Lots of friends come frequently.[80]
> Parents all the time. Brother and his friends some times. Friends some times.[81]

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[74] Coach questionnaire 3 Pangbourne 14 May 1998.
[75] Coach questionnaire 5 Pangbourne 12 May 1998.
[76] Coach questionnaire 7 Bristol 8 June 1999.
[77] Coach questionnaire Bristol 8 June 1999.
[78] SS, England player,Liverpool 29 July 1999.
[79] Non-elite questionnaire 7.
[80] Non-elite questionnaire 24.
[81] Elite questionnaire 9.

There appeared to be similar patterns in generations of players and the questionnaires and interviews yielded views that were broadly in agreement. In interviews however, for those with less supportive parents, mobility and access to transport was a major issue, to the extent that an unemployed England International was collected and returned home by her coach when she could not afford her own transport.[82] Approximately two thirds of the non-elite players regularly took lifts from other players. This raises the point that access to transport may be as important a factor in continuing to play as other commitments.

The role of the mother with relation to the players' careers can be shown by two contrasting examples. A young England player was initially encouraged by her father and elder brother until age eleven. By this stage, having accepted that her daughter was an exceptional player, the mother appears to have become more active in supporting the player and defending her from criticism. For example, she told an anecdote about being shouted at by a father on an opposing team who said that playing a girl on the team was an unfair advantage as the boys were afraid to tackle her daughter for fear of harming her. After acting in an emotionally and practically supportive manner, by funding the player's training and providing transport, the closeness of the family was such that the daughter did not want to leave home or move far away to college.[83]

The player could not perceive of a livelihood in football despite obtaining grades for continued study. She decided to become a PE teacher rather than go to America on a scholarship and justified the fact that the women are not given more than minimal expenses to play for England because the men 'draw' that much more than the women. When I suggested that the women are never promoted comparably, that as role models they are not idealised as estimable for girls and boys she answered that in her lifetime she could not imagine a woman playing to professional level in England.[84] Three years after the interview, she is exactly the kind of player likely to be offered a contract should the proposed FA professional league take off in the next decade.

As this player is popular as a spokesperson on behalf of the FA, she was typical of would-be insiders who tend to diplomatically toe the line and to be guarded in their views. The example shows a complex of influences, including the mother's ideas of femininity (which were modified as a result of the daughter's exceptional ability) and the norms of the football community with which the player was interacting as an elite participant. Obviously too, the player's own

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[82] VE, England player, Croydon 16 May 1998.
[83] SS and mother Adelphi Hotel Liverpool 29 July 1999.

personality was such that she was not prepared to travel to improve her prospects of play and employment.

A quite different example at non-elite level is the mother who supported her daughter's playing career, when her father disapproved.[85] This player had led to a long and varied relationship with football as a coach, player, tournament organiser, administrator and writer. However, the death of the mother was such a crisis in the life of her daughter that it effectively ended the active pursuit of football-related leisure. This leisure had fitted around a full time job which the respondent had now chosen to follow on a part-time basis. Like the earlier example, it is also suggestive about the role of confidence and intrinsic satisfaction of players. It appears to matter less that football for women is considered socially dubious, for those women who do play, than the support of a champion close to the player. Those who do not play may be responding to the social sanctions that surround women's football, from verbal abuse to ridicule. These examples suggest that personal support is vital. In this instance, only the mother has been discussed in this role but with further research, the supporter could be further discussed in shaping a playing career.

Here the interviews with elite and non-elite players and coaches differed from the questionnaires, which emphasised the role of fathers and brothers far more. At a very young age most players began to 'kick a ball about' with male relatives and only gradually learned that it was not suitable for older girls and women to play. In response to the question, 'What's you earliest memory of playing football?' the responses from elite and non-elite players were similar.

> Kicking a ball about with my brother and dad in the garden aged four.[86]
> Seven or eight with the lads at primary school, but my dad informed (sic) me, he taught me to kick a ball when I was a toddler and I played a lot with my elder brother.[87]
> Playing in the streets at home with my dad and next door neighbour – Louise – probably age eight upwards.[88]
> Kicking the ball about with my dad and brothers.[89]
> With my dad and family when growing up in Scotland.[90]
> In the back garden with my dad and sisters.[91]

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[84] SS Liverpool Adelphi Hotel 29 July 1999.
[85] RT, player, Bath 18 June 1999.
[86] Non-elite questionnaire 7.
[87] Elite questionnaire 18.
[88] Non-elite questionnaire 22.
[89] Elite questionnaire 2.
[90] Elite questionnaire 3.
[91] Non elite questionnire 24.

An older brother was cited as the person most frequently responsible for influencing their sisters to play the sport. Sometimes male cousins, neighbourhood friends or fathers were also influential figures. This point is substantive since male relatives often initiate girls' interest in the sport as play. In addition to the socialisation of girls as they mature, the perception of football as competition as children (male and female) grow older, rather than as play, therefore influences gender segregation as a means of ensuring a protected arena for boys *and* girls. In the case of only children, playing began frequently as an exceptional girl in a small gang of boys. It was seen to be one of many games and not perceived as more important than others. This is a common theme expressed in a variety of forms.

> Playing with my brother and his friends when I was about eight.[92]
> I had two male cousins and we would play football whenever I visited them. The first time I remember is when I was about ten years old.[93]
> When I was about four years old, I used to play in the street with all the boys.[94]
> At thirteen with younger brother.[95]
> With boys in 1989.[96]
> With my cousins at weekends on a caravan site when I was about seven years old.[97]

Another contributory factor is sporting atmosphere generally, though this varies according to whether the family perceives itself to be primarily spectator or participant. In this way girls' sporting life can be seen to be part of a domestic tradition or, outside the home, as part of early socialisation. For players over 18 the first challenge to this state of affairs occurred during the girls' entry to the later stages of primary education. Two specifically cited the separate playgrounds for boys and girls as an early influence.[98]

It is difficult to classify patterns of motivation of women players, however all were linked because they were choosing an activity thought inappropriate for their sex. Even the very young girls at eight and nine were aware that football was not something that adult women did conventionally. In answer to the question, 'Were you ever stopped from playing while at school?' the following young respondents were surprised by the interruption to their playing career.

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[92] Non-elite questionnaire 12.
[93] Elite questionnaire 10.
[94] GN Chorley Lancs 18 May 1999.
[95] Non-elite questionnaire 25.
[96] Elite questionnaire 14.
[97] Non-elite questionnaire 48.
[98] GN Chorley 18 May 1999; JE Chesterfield 10 June 1999.

> Yes, for six months because I went to a new school and girls there didn't play football. It was an all-girls' school, I was only there for six months.[99]
> Yes. Having played in the team at primary school I was stopped from playing at comprehensive school – they said it wasn't 'appropriate'![100]

Football was rarely a casual exercise option for women, they had to be especially motivated to face a system that was exclusionary. On the other hand school-based opportunities in some cases facilitated participation, as one fifteen year old player replied, 'I first played football when I was eleven at school'.[101]

At elite level, several respondents explored the theme that competitive team sport is a preparation for life. Most differentiated between club experience and international selection. Club experience was emphasised as being less a competitive relationship with team-mates than a co-operative and parallel relationship characterised by promotive interdependence. In part, this would seem to be supported by the responses of recreational players, several of whom listed a Captain or older player as their main influence. In contrast, at international level the mutual benefit of the collective involves competition for places so the separate accomplishments of individuals are paramount. Players are proud to play for England but playing for England rests on individual accomplishment and outperforming others for selection.

For those who have had a break from the sport at any level, accident and injury are relatively high on the list of reasons. Schedule constraints and transportation were other key factors. In answer to the question, 'Is there a time you stopped playing football?' the answers included:

> Yes, I had a year out due to working and also for a break. I had played every Sunday for eleven years.[102]
> I came back from London where I had played for Arsenal Ladies. I also worked at Arsenal F.C., for two years so when I came home I took a year out – basically to get settled with other things like work.[103]
> Yes. I stopped playing seven years ago for one year as I made a trip to hospital with a broken leg.[104]

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[99] VP, Centre of Excellence Player aged 15 Notts Forest Centre of Excellence 10 July 2000.
[100] TK, Centre of Excellence player aged 15, Notts Forest 17 July 2000.
[101] Non-elite questionnaire 54.
[102] Elite questionnaire 6.
[103] Elite questionnaire 8.
[104] Elite questionnaire 12.

However amongst those who had given up the sport it was rare to hear that another sport or recreation had replaced football; usually the decision to give up was explained as a change in priorities.

Few women indicated the English weather and exercising outdoors as de-motivating factors, though there were numerous anecdotes relating to the playing and changing environments from sharing pitches with grazing horses to serious injury caused by unseen broken glass. Rather, the challenge of facing the winter cold and mud led to feelings of being in control, identification with the body and pride in its achievements. Words such as 'capable', 'able', 'confidence' and 'personal identity' appeared to signal strength rather than imperatives about exercise, body shape and weight. Training frequently enabled the players to see themselves as objectively working on the body as a machine to improve performance. The fact that much of this collective action was done outdoors in natural settings was seen to be part of the enjoyment of participating.

In several instances coaches and players had opted for work that enabled them to have fixed, flexible working times in order to leave time free for training. This is only one public aspect of their life affected because of their participation as players. Many would like to earn a full time living in football but feel unable to gain access. Interviews with relatives added to my impression that the players are emotionally and financially invested in the sport. This began to answer my question about the worth of the game to the female player. Women travelling around the country to play football are experiencing sport tourism as part of the process of socialisation.[105] The most enduring tournaments, like the Lancashire Trophy include accommodation, some entertainment and excursions. Likewise, the Victoria Trophy in Nottingham has operated for seventeen years for all age groups and attracts national teams. At weekly games and special events, a fascinating expression of individual and group identity is on display; the fashion statements, such as headbands and bandannas, the mix of ages and body types, the degree of serious preparation for competition, the presence of supporters and so forth. In these settings women's football as a subculture with its own codes and signs is clearly evident. In considering the construction of identity in such settings, women's agency and negotiation with commercialised aspects of the game are visually very prominent. Professional men's football is not necessarily the standard against which all other forms of the sport are judged. Walvin has written

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[105] The level of hospitality ranges from warm pork pies and mushy peas in a Yorkshire pub, to tea and cakes in a tennis pavilion.

> While it is true that professional football was merely the tip of the iceberg, professionalism began to probe into every level of the game...few among the millions of weekend footballers, especially among working men, [who] would have refused the opportunity of turning professional. Thus in indirect ways the professional game became the norm against which millions of footballers ...gauged their own performances.[106]

This may be apply in some respects from goal celebrations to frequently used terminology, but something else is happening too. My perception of what that something is, will be open to re-interpretation but the comments of the players take us beyond the knowledge that football is the fastest growing sport for women to some understanding of how some females pursue and perceive the sport. For those women who are elite athletes there are some conflicts of identity and this can be expressed as being 'good for a girl'. The ambition of one player was to play for the Doncaster Belles as her highest aim:

> The Doncaster Belles are a team who have always been my destiny to play for. I never thought I'd get the chance, and now that I do I intend to stay with this Club until I am at an age where I can no longer play. But even then I will still take women's football further, by either going into physio or management.[107]

In addition some players view difference as part of the essential identity of the game. In answer to the question, 'Is women's football the same sport or a related sport to men's football?' the following conversation took place between three players.

> No, the men's game is different. You can't compare.
> A lot of women could be as good as men if they were given the chance, but they're not are they? Its male dominated.
> Irrelevant, it's not about women being as good as men, it's women's football.[108]

Donnelly has suggested in a study of subcultures of sport that the question of who has power to determine what constitutes the dominant culture and whose interests that serves is a significant part of cultural negotiation.[109] For a community to exist there would have to be some shared interpretation of the events that have shaped the group over time. Two comments from elite players reflect a lack of awareness of the historical forces in women's football. In answer to the question 'How would you describe the history of the ban of women's game?' the replies were:

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[106] James Walvin *The People's Game: The History of Football Revisited* 2nd Edn. Edinburgh, London: Mainstream Publishing Co 1994 pp.114-5.
[107] GB Doncaster Belles Doncaster 18 August 1999.
[108] GB, KW, MW, Doncaster Belles Doncaster 18 August 1999.

There never was a ban on the women's game, because there was no game to ban. The only restriction is that women cannot become professional footballers, but that wasn't a ban (sic) because women were never able to become professional footballers.[110]

It was okay before the industrial revolution when women were not expected to play sport. They were there just to watch. More women these days have a good physique compared to before.[111]

The responses reflect a perception that the recent rise of interest is indicative of progress and is therefore a modern phenomenon. A significant number of elite and club players left this section blank, which suggests that women players' knowledge of previous generations is limited. Those who did complete the section usually used a single exclamatory 'disgusting' or 'typical' and this left me unsure whether the player had just learnt of the ban or was expressing a considered view. The sense of a continuous tradition is the first element of community players lacked.[112] Nor were players and administrators necessarily curious about past events. Few women continue an interest in women's football beyond playing. Therefore the split between players and administrators that occurred early in men's football continues not to take place. Regional League administration is led by highly competent individuals who often work full-time or part-time, have children, play and train twice a week, attend league meetings, complete administrative tasks and coach young players.[113] It is perhaps little wonder that these people would channel their energies elsewhere.

4. Conclusion

The players' views suggest that a progressive shift in attitude from sport as a young man's pursuit is a revolution that has yet to happen. However, more encouragingly, enough is happening within women's football to be of academic interest. There may not be a sense of continuity or common destiny at the level of the sport in women's football but there is evidence of communal understanding in and between clubs and teams. This makes sense because teams have been

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[109] Peter Donnelly 'Subcultures in Sport: Resilience and Transformation' in Alan Ingham and John Loy (eds.) *Sport and Social Development: Traditions, Transitions, Transformations* Champaign: Illinois 1993 p. 76.
[110] EG Doncaster Belles 18 August 1999.
[111] FR Doncaster Belles 18 August 1999.
[112] Grant Jarvie 'Sport, Nationalism and cultural Identity' in Lincoln Allison (Ed.) *The Changing Politics of Sport* Manchester: Manchester University Press 1993 p.76 suggested three components of a shared experience leading to a collective identity. The first is a sense of continuity, the second shared memories of specific turning points and thirdly, a sense of common destiny.

created for diverse reasons, from participation to elite achievement. Nevertheless the rather pallid term 'Women's Football' does not describe a hermetically sealed product. Rather it is a pursuit open to negotiation by players and the regional leagues could provide much more information on the various practices across the country. Overall, changes in quantity have yet to produce a critical mass of players able to control the game beyond competitive and co-operative networks. Consequently, there have yet to be sufficient women playing or women playing sufficiently well to talk about a transformation in the conceptualisation of football. Traditional values of feminine appropriacy continue to affect women's football at the same time as female sport is allied to ideas of progress and modernity.

> Women's football is evolving a distinctive style of women's play...it will succeed in attracting women players because of its own beauty and grace, not because of its potential to mimic men players.[114]

Gender 'difference' is still the key to acceptance of women's football: the future of women's football *must be* feminine. This difference is not the term as used by feminists to indicate the multiplicity of shifting identities of women but a convenient cul-de-sac in which female participation is located as distinct and not mainstream.[115] Women's football enables sporting authorities to neatly compartmentalise female participation. It also allows female play, and by extension, male play to be protected. Nevertheless this thesis has focused on difference as variation without that differentiation constituting opposition. Therefore conflict and dissimilarity were not the only ways that women viewed football. A celebratory attitude was also obvious at all levels as players were determined to be accepted and appreciated. This may be why players keep scrapbooks and logs of achievement. This is one of the 'spaces' that help to piece together the jigsaw of English women's football culture. The process of actively collecting items and attaching memory to them appeared to be both intimate documentation of personal memory but also potentially powerful for the production of public memory.

In England, recent media reports, such as the one covering the retirement of Maureen Marley as Captain look likely to continue the trend of amatuerism, even when approaching the European Championships:

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[113] Sheila Rollinson (Secretary of the East Midlands League) and Angela Henson (Manager of ES Barwell East Midlands Umbro club of the year 2000) are two examples.
[114] Joseph Blatter ' The Future is Feminine' *FIFA News* 6 July 1995 Editorial.
[115] Linda Gordon 'On "difference" *Genders* Vol. 10 pp. 91-111 differentiates between the male-female dichotomy and diversity among women

> 'Women's football is still essentially an amateur game and if we can't enjoy the occasion there's something wrong.[116]

In some senses the interviews support this view as women's football is a voluntaristic initiative peopled by enthusiasts. In the revival of women's football, one aspect contributing to maintenance and growth is this construction of a playing community beyond (usually preceding) extensive central bureaucratisation of the game. These distinctive forms of play are nevertheless highly organised and reflect a deep level of engagement, to the degree that participatory culture is the principal dimension of women's football. However, as has been argued throughout, in order to assess the importance of the meanings that women players have made since the 1960s, the changes within the sport have to be set in a broader frame of reference. The interpretations of the players in this chapter stand against the bigger picture of overlapping and competing agendas for both women in sport and gender in football.

It would be useful to extend this kind of investigation because the variety of playing identities is such that a comprehensive analysis is not possible in the space, but could include religion, ethnicity or sexuality as lines of future enquiry. There has been little work which compares various recreational, competitive and non-elite representative leagues, for example. So rather than describing women's football, it is possible to see that certain groups have created participatory cultures, and as such, the experiences of the majority of women players in England are, as yet, under-researched.

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[116] 'Marley set for a final fling' www.bbc.com 21 June 2001.

CONCLUSION

Though there has been evidence of a shift in the perception of football as an appropriate game for women in England since the 1960s, there is still a widespread tendency to devalue female participation. Consequently, women's football remains pointedly amateur though the outlook tends towards a limited degree of professionalisation. Domestic and international expansion strategies for women's football in very recent years have produced partial integration with existent administrative structures. This has created a situation where women joined the family of football as unwelcome stragglers with a reputation for being difficult which preceded them by some seventy years. The latecomers are currently attempting to ingratiate themselves with aged and rather grumpy bureaucracies who, in turn, are keen to prevent mischief but not sure where to lodge new arrivals. In this sense, the English Football Association policy of presenting female players to the public as essentially a different branch of the family is representative of other national and international sports organisations.

Increased participation and elite success are crucial elements of the development of football for women in this era according to football authorities. However, players suggest that enjoyment of a personal and collective hobby is the main reason for their engagement. One aspect of the study has been to examine how shared ideas and opinions emerge in the community and in turn how these mutual understandings shape strategic choices. For instance, women's football has moved away from what could be called its traditional focal point of spectator-supported leisure but by the end of the 1990s had consolidated its place in the international arena in multi-event entertainment, such as the Olympic Games, and in its own right with Women's World Cup matches broadcast around the globe. During the period of study women's football has developed a public relations profile with FIFA leading the way in licensed products and sponsorship, now extended by the Women's USA franchise. These initiatives have been underpinned by a radical change in tactics by the leaders of football administration who, until the 1980s, did not want to include women in the football community. The financial and bureaucratic patronage of these associations has been overstated as a catalyst for increased participation and the localised enthusiasm of collectives of players underestimated. Yet much remains to be known about the factors that contributed to the emergence of these new ideas in the bureaucracies. Even less defined is the relationship between the mass of players and the tiny pinnacle presented to the public in mediated forms of the sport.

In some key respects the widespread adoption of female play by national associations and by professional sports organisations remains partial and disputed. Women's football in England has yet to gain a positive high profile and remains a distinctly unglamorous sport, especially when compared with the United States. The techniques employed by sport to enter public and corporate markets, including the use of new technologies, have influenced women's football to the extent that long term objectives to establish professional leagues necessarily involve sponsorship and patronage by valued media partners; television in particular. So if cable television companies have provided an opportunity for a professional league in the United States, independent of the tradition of male teams and franchises on the one hand, on the other, the belief in gender-segregated sport emerges as a defining feature of the institutionalisation of women's football. At the same time, the absence of a public memory of a history of women's football contributes to the idea of participation as recently fashionable and Chapter One illustrated how this view had come to be the academic and popular consensus. The issue of how to present the female player to a fee-paying live or televised public is one current issue affected by this interpretation of difference.

The vast majority of English women will not play football during their lifetime. To date there is no English women's professional league. Instead there are a handful of semi-professional players and thousands of amateur women and girls whose play is watched by a smattering of spectators. In the home of football, women's football has no home, in a local or national sense. Chapter Two outlined how there has been an unbroken tradition of communities of teams, clubs and leagues, playing in periods of concentrated and more interrupted, distributed participation. The increase in the number of women participants since the 1960s has largely come about as the result of a loose alliance of devotees that accordingly demonstrates continuity from an earlier model. This has influenced the quality and quantity of playing opportunities at key moments, for better and for worse. Encouragingly, in 2002 the mass of female participation in England still relies on the voluntarism that played such a major role in the early stages of women's football and this has endured in a diffuse and flexible way. In this sense, at the level of organising play, women control their own sport.

Less positively, the tradition of over seventy years of spectator-supported entertainment is much less in evidence in contemporary women's play. This seems to be one of the strong indicators that one could not ignore the relationship between participation and politics, even if the players wanted to see football in an insular way. A paradoxical gentlemanly-political correctness operates otherwise, whereby equal but different sports policy discriminates against women, sometimes unintentionally, as an essentially dissimilar cohort of players to men and deserving of discrete treatment. The nature of equality is therefore twisted to mean

something like protecting women from male play, which in practice defends and privileges masculinity. For most of the period under question women's football as an organised competitive activity has been the confine of adult and young women. This reflects a wider change in British society since the 1960s where women have tended to participate in activities virtually reserved for men. For example, the current debates about whether women should be deployed as combat troops or in peacekeeping roles is another case where individuals are subject to legislation based on the classification of women as a group. In this sense the taboos that surround women's access to football are evident in other traditionally male occupations. In this way mixed competitive football remains inconceivable for the majority of male and female participants and the general public. Football is not as serious as life and death and yet it remains inconceivable for a woman to compete in a formally sanctioned leisure activity against men. In suggesting the need for a revision of gender in Chapter Three the dominant structures and discourses are shown to be exclusionary by design.

Difference is used in another way throughout the thesis, to include both multiplicity and similarity in women's experiences of football. Practically and conceptually, the way we think about gender in football should be subject to revision and change because it is not just in the increased bureaucratisation of the sport itself that these practices have been institutionalised but also in wider social and cultural systems. In order to shift from equality to equity, the liberal reformism implied by the fastest growing sport is questioned in favour of a more controversial radicalism to argue that protected employment opportunities for male players and coaches have been depoliticized and need to be challenged. Increased participation has yet to lead to a critical mass of female play and if we are to accelerate change then these wider imbalances require revision through targeted advocacy and campaigning.

In describing how we had arrived at this moment, Chapter Four discusses contemporary components of the narrative that appropriates sport to one gender, body size or type at the expense of another. The constructedness of this cultural practice incorporates numerous minor conflicts and the various kinds of memory in women's football suggests the need for transformation of our understanding of the female player but also of sporting custom and English social history. For the majority of girls in the survey football meant informal mixed games and a kick about until puberty and school-based feminine appropriate team games after adolescence. By the time that the Women's Football Association was formed in 1969, the seeds of change for the status of the male player were sown. Early attempts to formalise alliances to develop and administer women's football were characterised by limited resources and disagreements about the future direction of the sport. Rapid increases in the number of players in the mid-1980s reflected the strength and the weakness of voluntary efforts of the

administrators who had limited time but did ensure continuity through their long-term commitment. Recent interest and recognition in academic circles has coincided with the patronage of football authorities in the 1990s. In contrast, the determined women players have such a varied and complex history that much remains to be found and presented. The photographs in the appendices of this thesis suggest an illusive glimpse of football as part of the daily round for women players and the variety of clothing is alone enough to prompt further inquiry. Chapter Five has attempted to begin to explore the noticeable gap between theory and practice in women's sport, particularly in football, by attempting to link the material conditions of women's play with academic knowledge of some female experiences of that leisure.

A key question for the sport and the players remains the extent to which women are playing their own game. The difference in status accorded men's and women's elite football is immense as we could expect. So profound has the effect of the 1921 ban been on the legitimacy of women's involvement it is difficult to talk about female mass participation in this country in the near future. In and around football, from the Professional Footballers Association to the Association of Football Writers, changes in attitude are becoming more evident. The media's role is largely conspicuous by its absence in the history of women's football. Apart from some national and local newspapers and Channel Four television in the 1980s coverage has been sporadic and women players share more with other female athletes in this regard than with male footballers in having considerable and substantive ground to make up. So a clear vision of woman as footballer was difficult to determine from these sources whereas women players offered, often celebratory, definitions of their playing persona and the ethos of the team. One of the ways our understanding of the term player can develop from this is to focus on those individual practices and actions that form a sense of agency.

There is an international insistence on the feminine nature of women's football. The control, like the definition, of football for women depends upon the patronage of the sport's authorities who, in turn, are keen to differentiate between men and women players. The social and cultural expectations of women's behaviour have changed during the period of this study but women's opportunities as players are confined to those achieved by women's football, not football as such. The inaugural season of the first professional league in the United States, the third in the world after Italian and Japanese business-sponsored leagues, has been partially successful. Bright and beautiful players who are idolised by spectators created the wholesome relationship on which the image of the league is based. It is becoming a valuable commodity. Given the dominance of masculine sports in the United States there remains some way to go

to establish the league but in England there is discussion of using satellite companies to promote a professional women's league and a European Cup is now in its second year and is another potential form of professionalisation. The transferability of the model of ownership by television companies will be complicated in both models by the absence of a favourable image for the sport, the lack of a fan base at spectator level and the obvious difference in male and female playing standards at elite level.

Nevertheless the women's version of the game has its own fragile memory that reflects the players, aspects of community and beyond. We can observe recent changes to this construct as education-based football for females represents a shift in the balance of participation but also in bureaucratic relations. At elite level, central administrators are increasingly intent on mirroring male professional systems. The current tactic of locating Centres of Excellence in local Football League clubs and elite Academies in educational settings is a new moment in the problematic placement of the sport. Women's relationship to football has made a social and cultural, if not economic, impact in English life. There are obvious parallels with other women's sports, with amateur football and other minority pursuits. In other respects football, as a high profile national team sport tied to the 'English disease' of violence, is a very specific example. So, while locating the revival of women's football after the 1960s in the wider sweep of women's history and football history this century, some markers have been placed to trace the construction and maintenance of a playing community.

At key moments, there has been rapid expansion of participation followed by retrenchment or consolidation. Arguments for a recent and rapid rise in players are at best partially accurate. The parochial and voluntaristic culture of local clubs has been very successful in organising play but less effective in transmitting ideas of community amongst players and the general public. This is a feature of the sport that could be explored further. The competitive interdependency of teams and clubs *is* the identity of women's football rather than evidence of a national community. In this way, most women's football is not very different in 2001 than it was in 1971 or 1921. In other ways the Football Association is backing projects aimed at sustainable development because 'Professionalism is inevitable'.[1]

Given the divisive framework of the development of sport for men and women it is not surprising that every new proposal for women's football tends to degenerate into a rehearsal of the same old questions. Women's weakness, inexperience and lack of achievement relative

[1] http://www.the-fa.org/this_is_thefa 19 November 2001

to men appear all too visible in football. In a world grown complicated and prone to rapid innovation, the order to be found in the explanation that men are essentially better at football is a simple answer to a complex of questions. The organisation of the work has been influenced by these cyclical debates in examining the persistent themes of women's participation. Free market economics have been pursued in England to the extent that there is almost unbridled belief in competition, as we can see from the current education system. In this environment, the system-building of the football authorities is clearly of its time in terms of successive initiatives, inputs, outputs and number crunching. Against this competitive background it is illogical to have a vision of the future which regulates women's disadvantage as its fundamental proposition.

If this project investigated the extent to which women's football makes a case for protecting the place of sport in our society, it had to conclude that it is difficult to propose a future for mixed elite sport given football's place in the global entertainment economy today. By extension, it is also presumptuous to herald a new dawn when present trends forecast a feminine era in football to be a distant possibility. However, the findings indicated that women playing football for pleasure, health, association, independence and personal achievement are principal elements of that evolving future. Of the numerous propositions pursued in this work two have been overtaken that encapsulate the peculiar circumstance of women's football. The first is that the oral history of women football players changes the debate because data about the number of players tells us one story and not the most interesting. The values that women bring to bear in sport are more elusive but also more compelling. Drawn by the vision of my informants, history has been composed by a large variety of themes not always evidently or logically connected with football in the academic treatments undertaken so far.

The second is that the place of women in English football presents some fragments that are essential to understand the place of this sport in our current culture and society. Not only will we pay a high price for a target-driven success if those volunteer practitioners at the heart of sports' development are not consulted. The derision of women in sport, football particularly, does little to normalise physical activity for females and also ignores some of the positive sporting values including mutual respect, engagement and collaboration. A comprehensive portrait of the complex realities of contemporary football and women's place in English society would have to acknowledge these and other aspects of female ownership of football. Hopefully we are moving in a direction when the experience described by the first informant belongs to the past and we can begin to appreciate the view proposed by the second.

They call me dirty…'Oh, look at those dykes – lesbian!'…Men laugh and comment like it's a joke…'Women can't play football'…'It's a man's game'…'All women footballers are gay, aren't they?'…When I played in boys' teams I usually had to deal with insulting remarks and comments.[2]

Cause it was us that were a unit…and it really…1982-83 was the best time because we did everything together. We trained twice a week, we'd play on a Sunday, we'd socialise. It was a really, really special time and when I talk to the people who played then we all felt the same… it really was special.[3]

[2] SQ, ex-England international and WFA administrator, Bath 10 June 2001.
[3] GN, player, coach and administrator, Chorley Lancs18 May,19 June 1999.

List of Appendices

Appendix A **A Fine All Round Player** Fred Spurgin postcard circa 1920 referred to in Chapter Two as an early example of the ways in which women's football passed into popular culture (private collection of Peter Bridgett).

Appendix B **Baldwin's United Ladies' Football Team.** This Chapman of Swansea postcard circa 1920 referred to in Chapter Two as an early example of the ways in which women's football passed into popular culture and contrasts with the uniforms of the previous card and the Stoke Ladies' team photograph (private collection of Jane Ebbage).

Appendix C **Stoke Ladies' Football Team circa 1921-3.** Private photograph referred to in Chapter Two and Four. Arthur Bridgett stands on the rear right and E Carroll, the coalman's daughter, is at the centre of the back row. Len Bridgett's wife and one of his daughters are on the left of the back row. The English Ladies' Football Cup trophy is displayed in the foreground (private collection of Peter Bridgett).

Appendix D **Corinthian versus Lancashire Programme 1951** referred to in the text to show how individuals and groups of players were presented to the audience and also to indicate a level of entrepreneurialism at a time when it is commonly held that women's football had negligible spectator support (private collection of Sheila Rollinson).

Appendix E **Map of Women's Football Clubs Registered with the WFA in England 1980-1** referred to in Chapter Two. The maps were produced because WFA documentation for the period 1969-1992 was difficult to obtain. The information was compiled from WFA Newsletters and league tables. Therefore, though only partially accurate, the maps indicate that it is possible to dispute the view that the sport did not have a country-wide participation base in the early 1980s.

Appendix F **Map of Women's Football Clubs Registered with the WFA in England 1982-3** referred to in Chapter Two. The red buttons indicate clubs who were continued to appear in WFA Newsletters and league tables as currently active and so indicates some degree of sustained development. The purple buttons indicate newly formed clubs appearing across the country.

Appendix G **Map of Women's Football Clubs Registered with the WFA in England 1984-5** referred to in Chapter Two. Again, the red and purple buttons indicate sustained involvement and the blue newly formed clubs taken from WFA Newsletters and league tables. The North is generally a noteworthy area of growth.

Appendix H **Map of Women's Football Clubs Registered with the WFA in England 1986-7** referred to in Chapter Two. Reflects a slower growth than previous years but it is difficult to assess whether this reflects a trend in participation or a lack of monitoring on behalf of the association. It is possible to see three or four new teams in some

counties and no new teams in others, so I would tend towards the second interpretation.

Appendix I **Map of Women's Football Clubs Registered with the WFA in England 1987-8** referred to in Chapter Two. The yellow pins indicate country-wide growth in areas where teams are already established. This would seem to support Dorothy Miller's analysis, referred to in Chapter Two of this thesis, that existing teams attracted players and when squads became too large for everyone to get a game each week, new teams would be formed. Some of the five new London teams created during this season are obscured by other colours.

Appendix J **Map of Women's Football Clubs Registered with the WFA in England 1989-90** referred to in Chapter Two. The cluster of clubs around London is now an identifiable pattern as is the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Sheffield cluster which shows the strong tradition of the East Midlands Alliance, later the East Midlands League.

Appendix K **List of Teams Surveyed** for this thesis. The local focus of the non-elite teams contrasts with the national scope of the Premiership and representative teams. This perspective is supplemented throughout the thesis by interviews and participant observation.

Appendix L **Jenny Harris** photograph. One of the first pictures of a woman wearing an England jersey circa 1920 (private collection of Gail Newsham).

Appendix M **Dick, Kerr Ladies** postcard circa 1916 and probably the oldest postcard I was able to trace though David Williamson included images from 1895 in *Belles of the Ball*. Dick, Kerr's wore a recognisable football strip from the start in contrast to other munitions teams like Bennet's.

Appendix N **Bennett's Munitionettes** postcard circa 1918 are wearing boots and flannel-type shorts with woollen stockings and a variety of headgear.

Appendix O **Scottish Women's Team** photograph circa World War One because, presumably, the soldiers were home on leave. I especially like the children trying to get their faces into shot but this was bought at a car-boot sale by the collector and I've had little luck in tracing the team in spite of contacting the SFA, researchers at the University of Strathclyde and individual players (private collection Jane Ebbage).

Appendix P **England XI v France XI 1949** photograph. International competition was revived quickly after the war and several of the players pictured here had been involved in this kind of game for over twenty years when this photograph was taken, for example Lily Parr. Many of the French and English women had longstanding friendships.

Appendix Q **Transcript of Player Interview** to show methodology, particularly the reciprocal interviewer/interviewee relationship and how this led to the compilation of the private sources, for example the postcards at appendix R.

Appendix R **Postcards of Women's football Teams circa 1921-3** the collector interviewed in appendix Q had started to gather these images ten years before and there are potentially many more in the hands of postcard collectors. They show that munitions football was not the only form of women's participation in the early phase of interest and, women's work and leisure, rather than charitable fund-raising, influenced the formation of teams. The uniform has also become more standardised compared with the Baldwin's image at appendix B and Bennetts at appendix N.

Appendix S **Transcript of Eite Representative Player Interview** to show how player's negotiate various conceptual aspects of their performance and issues around the sport more widely.

A FINE ALL-ROUND PLAYER.

Appendix B

BALDWINS UNITED LADIES' FOOTBALL TEAM.

Chalfont, Seattle

TEXT BOUND INTO

THE SPINE

thanks to:—

His Worship the Mayor of Barrow-in-Furness and the Mayoress for their kind patronage.

The Directors of the Barrow Rugby League Club for granting the use of the ground free of charge.

ıe Officials and Members of the teams, who have kindly given their services.

derman A. A. J. Trippier (Referee).

derman F. Dodd, J.P., and Mr. C. Jones (Linesmen).

r. Philip Stoller for window display.

R. Green, Esq., and K. Waite, Esq., for publicity.

he ticket sellers and all who have in so many ways contributed to the success of our effort on behalf of a worthy cause.

he Advertiser who has taken space in programme.

LANCASHIRE & CHESHIRE AUXILIARY

Printers' Pension Corporation

Patron: The Right Hon. THE EARL OF DERBY, M.C.

President: GEOFFREY L. TILLOTSON, Esq.

FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN

LADIES' FOOTBALL MATCH

FOR THE FURNESS TROPHY

CORINTHIAN LADIES

(Manchester)

(Acclaimed as Britain's Premier Ladies' Team)

V.

LANCASHIRE LADIES

(A Selected Representative Team)

At CRAVEN PARK, BARROW

(By kind permission of the Directors)

Saturday, July 21st, 1951

KICK-OFF 3-15 p.m.

All Proceeds in aid of the Printers' Pension Corporation

Have YOU bought your ticket for the Autographed Ball?
Price 3d. each

PROGRAMME - - PRICE 2d.

Appendix D

questions are often asked. You may have the opportunity to judge for yourself. Many people go to ladies' football matches out of curiosity, but we feel sure that before half-time you will admit that the girls play the type of football that entertains the public the attacking game, with the ball on the ground. The girls play for the love of the game, and willingly give their services to raise money for charity. To them football is a serious matter. They play with a full-size ball on the regulation size field for the full 90 minutes. So please give them every encouragement and in return they will give you a good afternoon's sport.

CORINTHIAN LADIES (MANCHESTER)

Formed February, 1949, the team has had a rapid rise to fame, having played every ladies' team of note and beaten all. They have travelled more than 7,000 miles and raised over £5,000 for various charities. To date, the team has played 32 consecutive games without defeat, scoring 251 goals against 25. This has gained for them the distinction of being acclaimed Britain's finest ladies' team. Mr. Percy Ashley, 214 Fog Lane, Didsbury, Manchester, is Hon. Manager and is responsible for the style of play, modelled on the famous Corinthian style of old. Average age of team is 18½ years. The team has recently won the Festival of Britain Ladies' Championship Trophy, and in addition have also won the following trophies:—

Southern Cup, Manchester Area Cup, "Sports Magazine" Cup, Roses Trophy, Midland Trophy, Cresswell Trophy, Odeon Championship Trophy, Belle Vue Trophy, the last six won outright.

Mr. and Mrs. Wood act as Welfare Officers to the team. The club has another team, Dynamo Ladies, who are fast coming to the top.

CORINTHIAN LADIES (MANCHESTER)

(Light Blue Shirts, Black Shorts)

C. Mason (1)

J. Collier (2) J. Clarke (3)

M. Jones (4) I. Hebron (5) K. Lear (6)

A. Elliot (7) D. Ashley (Capt.) (8) D. Allcock (9) E. Broughton (10) B. Large (11)

Referee: Alderman A. A. J. Trippier (Eccles)

Linesmen: Alderman F. Dodd, J.P. and Mr. C. Jones (Eccles)

J. Hallows (11) H. Holford (10) S. Pinder (9) D. Machinson (8) P. Jones (7)

A. Nixon (6) F. Cloake (5) W. Faulkner (5)

A. Barnes (3) D. Holford (Capt.) (2)

J. Lowe (1)

LANCASHIRE LADIES

(White Shirts, Black Shorts)

LANCASHIRE LADIES

These girls have been selected from various sources and have played together on several occasions. They play a splendid game, and most of them have a great deal of big match experience. They are very keen to put an end to the Corinthians' amazing run of success. Can they succeed where others have failed? You can be assured they will go all out for the full 90 minutes' play and will fight very hard to achieve their object. Mr. Holford is the Hon. Team Manager, ably assisted by Mrs. Holford as Welfare Officer. Their two daughters have been selected for the team. The Trainer is Mr. Boyd.

CORINTHIAN LADIES (MANCHESTER)

CLAIRE MASON. Age 16. A very efficient goalkeeper, "Lofty." Has a style very like Frank Swift.

JEAN COLLIER. Age 17. "Smiler" uses her head to save her legs. Is a very good and intelligent positional player.

JOAN CLARKE. Age 18. "Clarkie" never gets worried, plays an unorthodox style. Is hard to get past.

IRENE HEBRON. Age 18. "Legs" is an ardent Denis Compton and Arsenal fan. Is a fine exponent of the sliding tackle.

MURIEL JONES. School teacher and a good attacking footballer. Could give lessons to many in this art.

KATHLEEN LEAR. Age 15. Little "Kathie" is regarded as one of the best ever. She is a schoolgirl champion runner.

ALICE ELLIOTT. Age 17. Known as "Twinkle toes," is very tricky with a splendid shot. She is an ardent player and lives for the game.

DORIS ASHLEY. Age 27. "Skipper" is captain and schemer in chief. Always seems to be where the ball is. Odeon lady footballer of 1950 gold medal award. Played for England and France.

DOROTHY ALLCOCK. Age 19. "Dot" is a very cool headed player and holds her forwards together excellently and yet when occasion arises goes well on her own.

EDNA BROUGHTON. Age 20. "Nippy" is undoubtedly the best inside left in the game so far as ladies are concerned. Has played for England.

BARBARA LARGE. Age 16. "Babs" is a box of tricks and has a terrific shot. Can play equally well on either wing.

LANCASHIRE LADIES

JEAN LOWE. Age 19. (Stockport). Has a great reputation. Always picked for a selected side.

DOREEN HOLFORD. Age 20. (Benchill). Has a vast experience of big match play. A great full-back.

ALMA BARNES. Age 14. (Wythenshawe). Only a youngster, yet can get the ball away in good style. Never gives in.

WINNIE FAULKNER. Age 17. (Eccles). Not much of her, but all is put to good use. Has never played a poor game.

FLO CLOAKE. Age 17. (Withington). A Rock of Gibraltar. Natural left-footer and splendid header of a ball.

ALMA NIXON. Age 19. (Manchester). Steady type of player. Very hard to pass, and a great student of the game. Likes to referee.

JOAN HALLOWS. Age 21. (Gorton). Never gives in and afraid of nothing. Dances about, but usually comes away with the ball.

HAZEL HOLFORD. Age 18. (Benchill). Splendid shot, with plenty of experience. Knows where the goal is, and usually gets there.

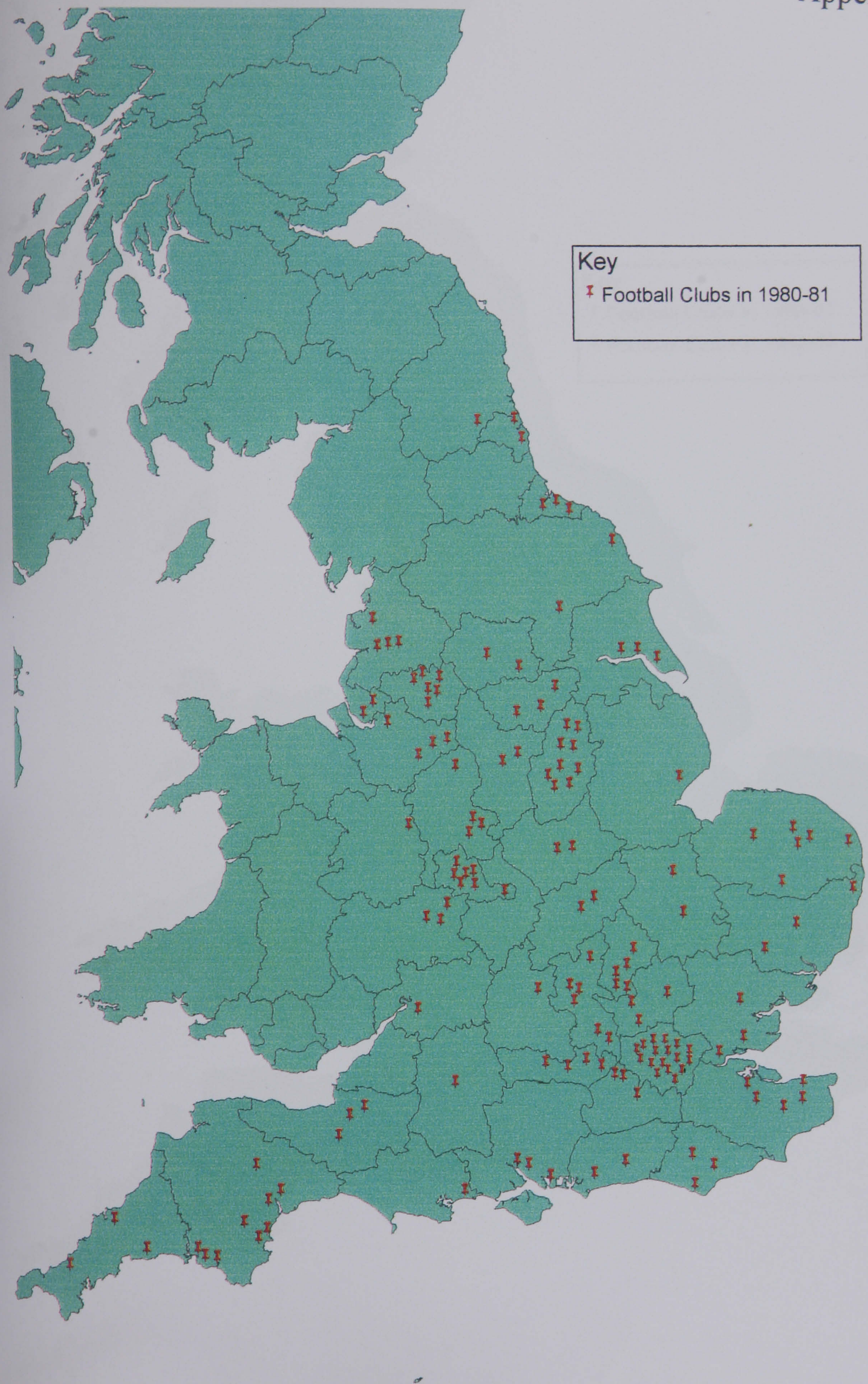
SHEILA PINDER. Age 16. (Blackpool). Always a danger. Can hit the ball with either foot. Has played in goal.

DOREEN MACHINSON. Age 16. (Edgeley). Improving every match. Just got her big chance, and she has earned it.

PHYLLIS JONES. Age 16. (Reddish). Lovely player. Good ball control and a good shot. Gets the ball across well.

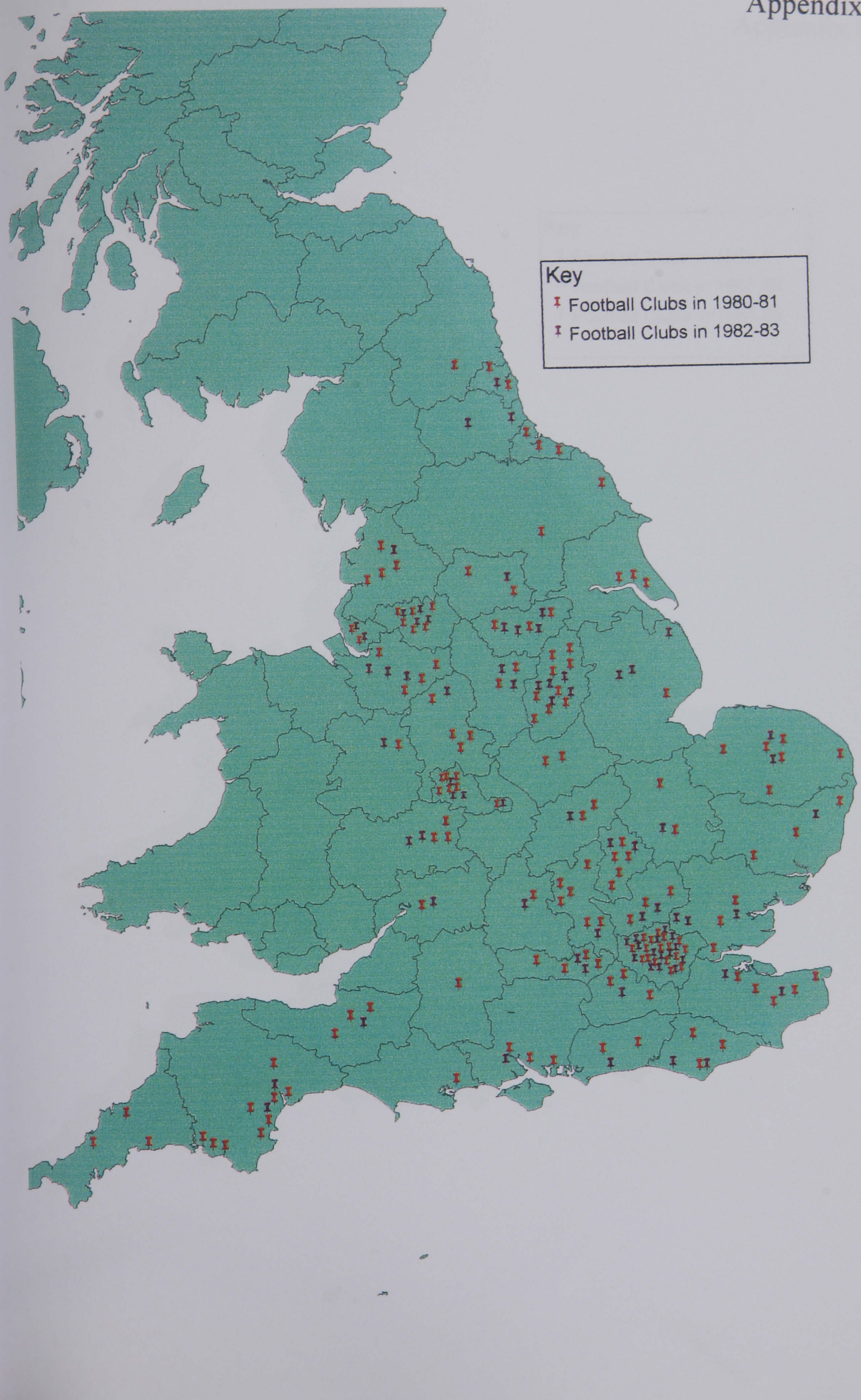
Women's football clubs registered with the WFA in England in season 1980-81

Appendix E



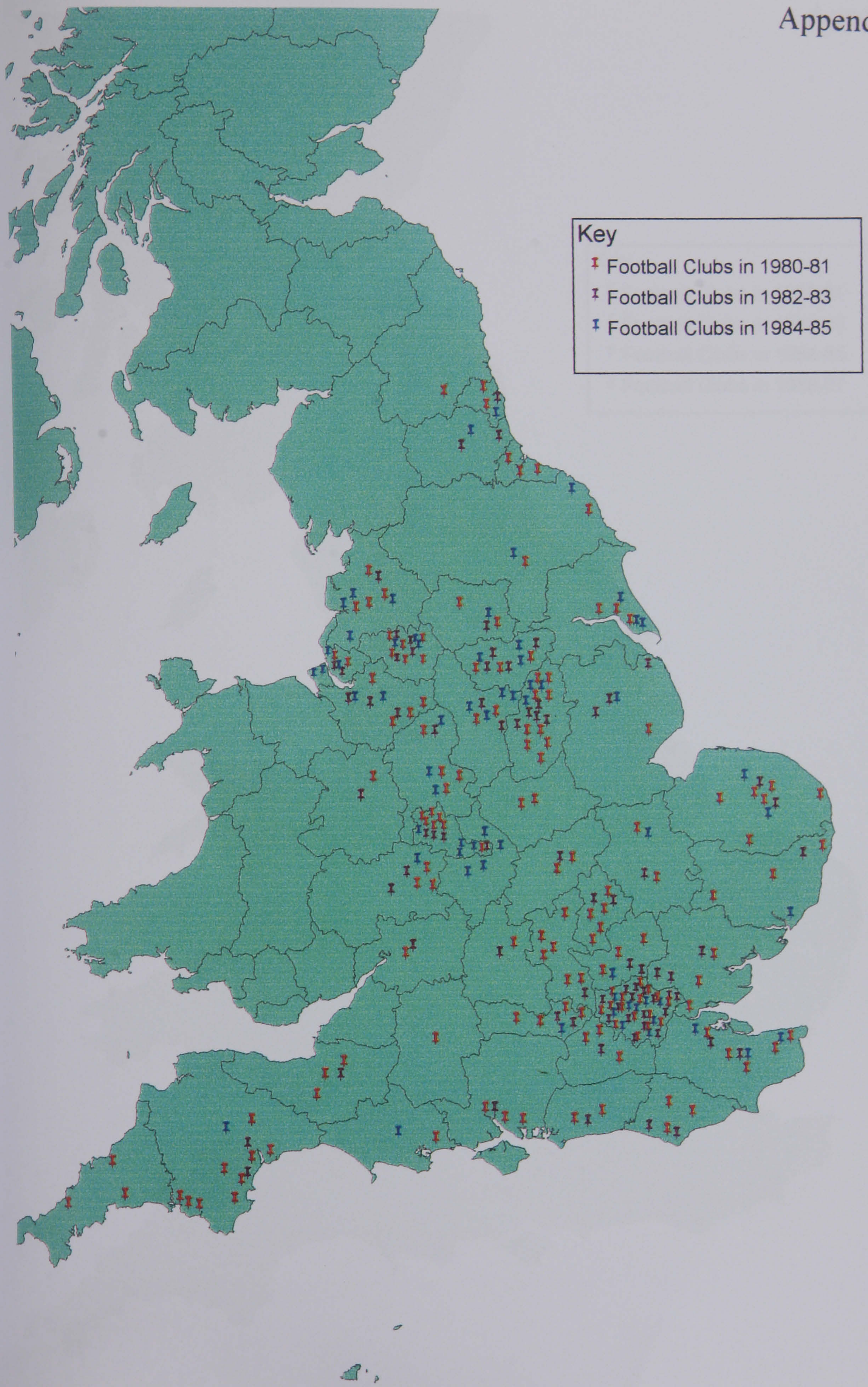
Women's football clubs registered with the WFA in England in season 1982-83

Appendix F



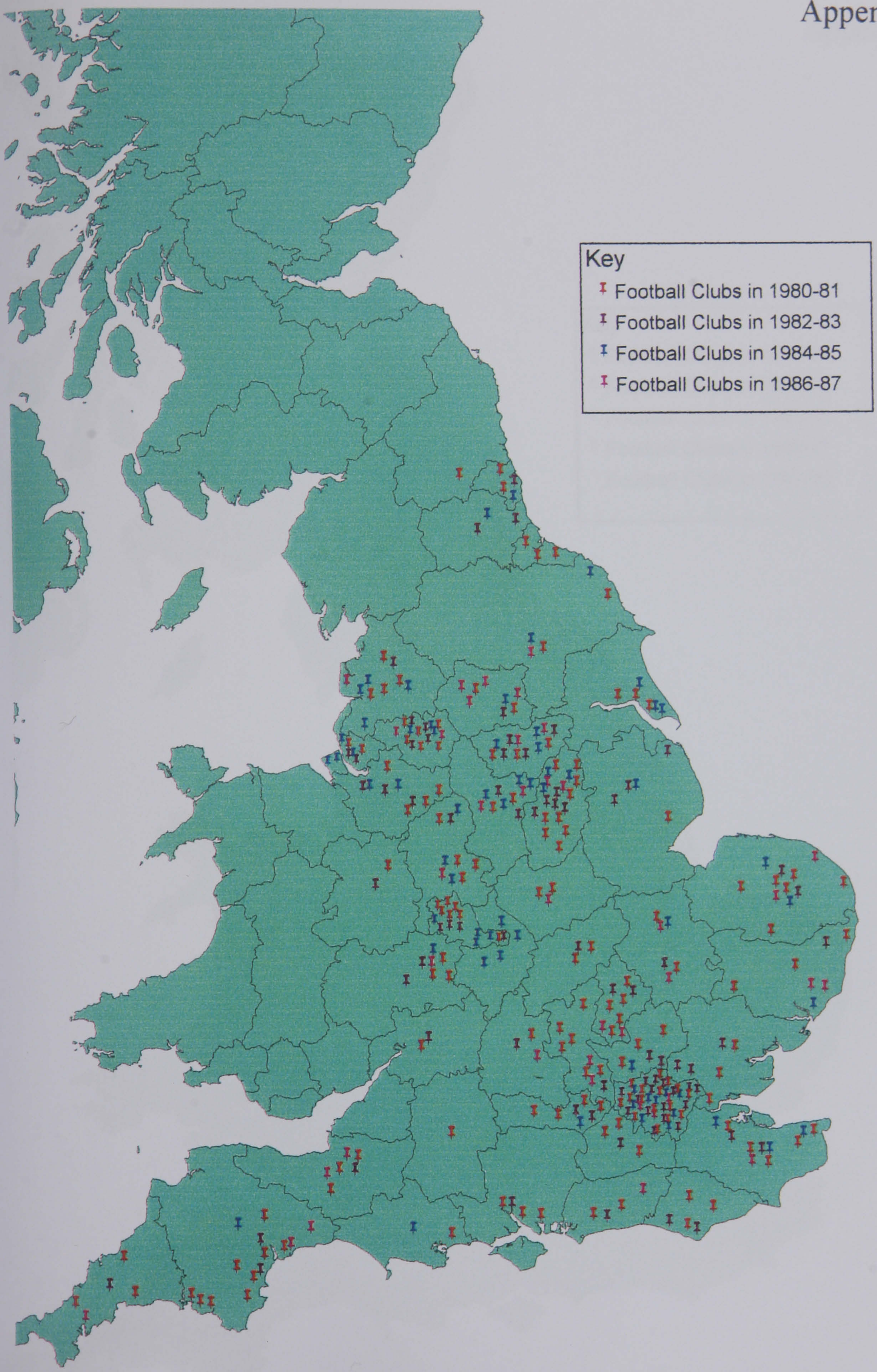
Women's football clubs registered with the WFA in England in season 1984-85

Appendix G



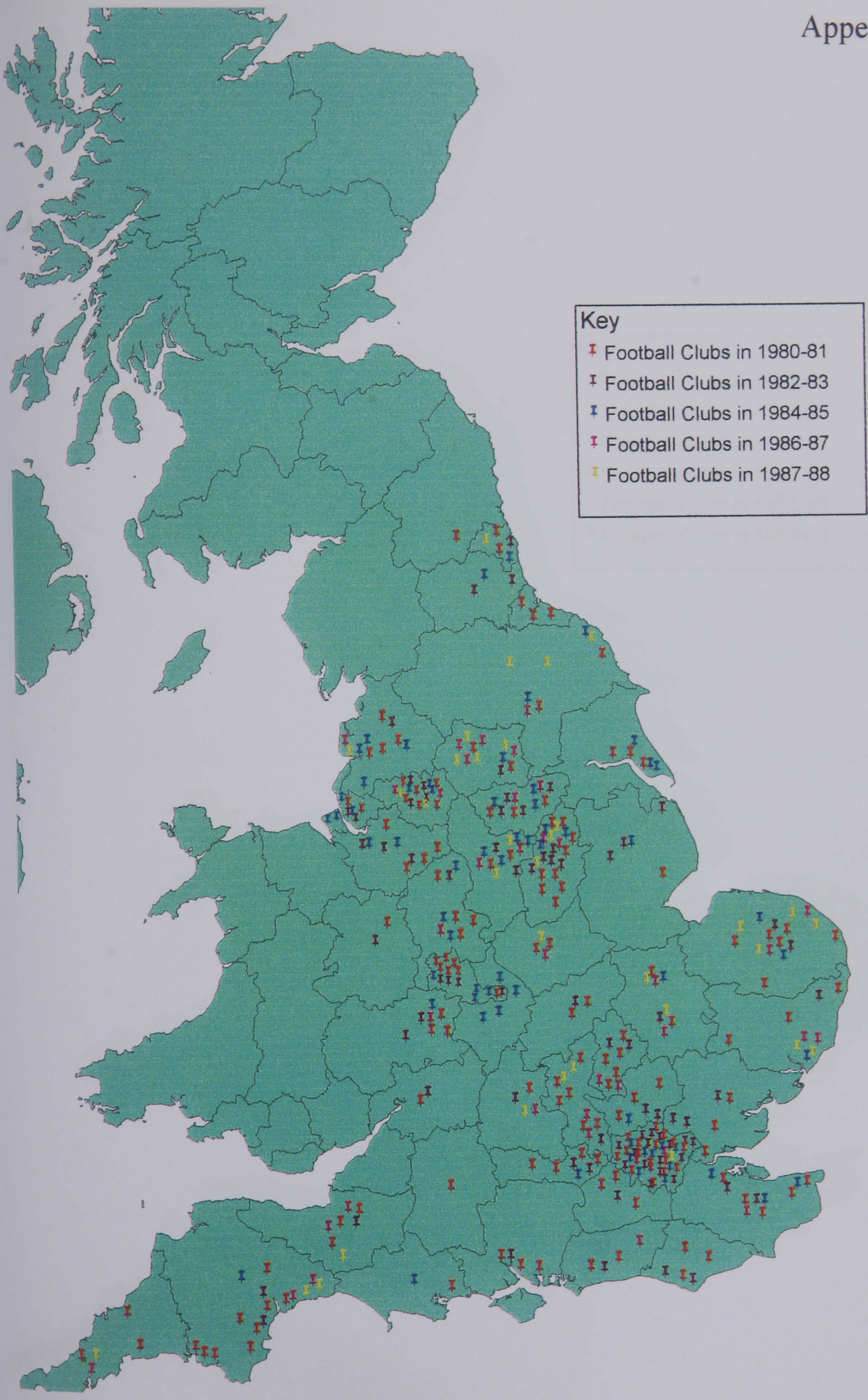
Women's football clubs registered with the WFA in England in season 1986-87

Appendix H



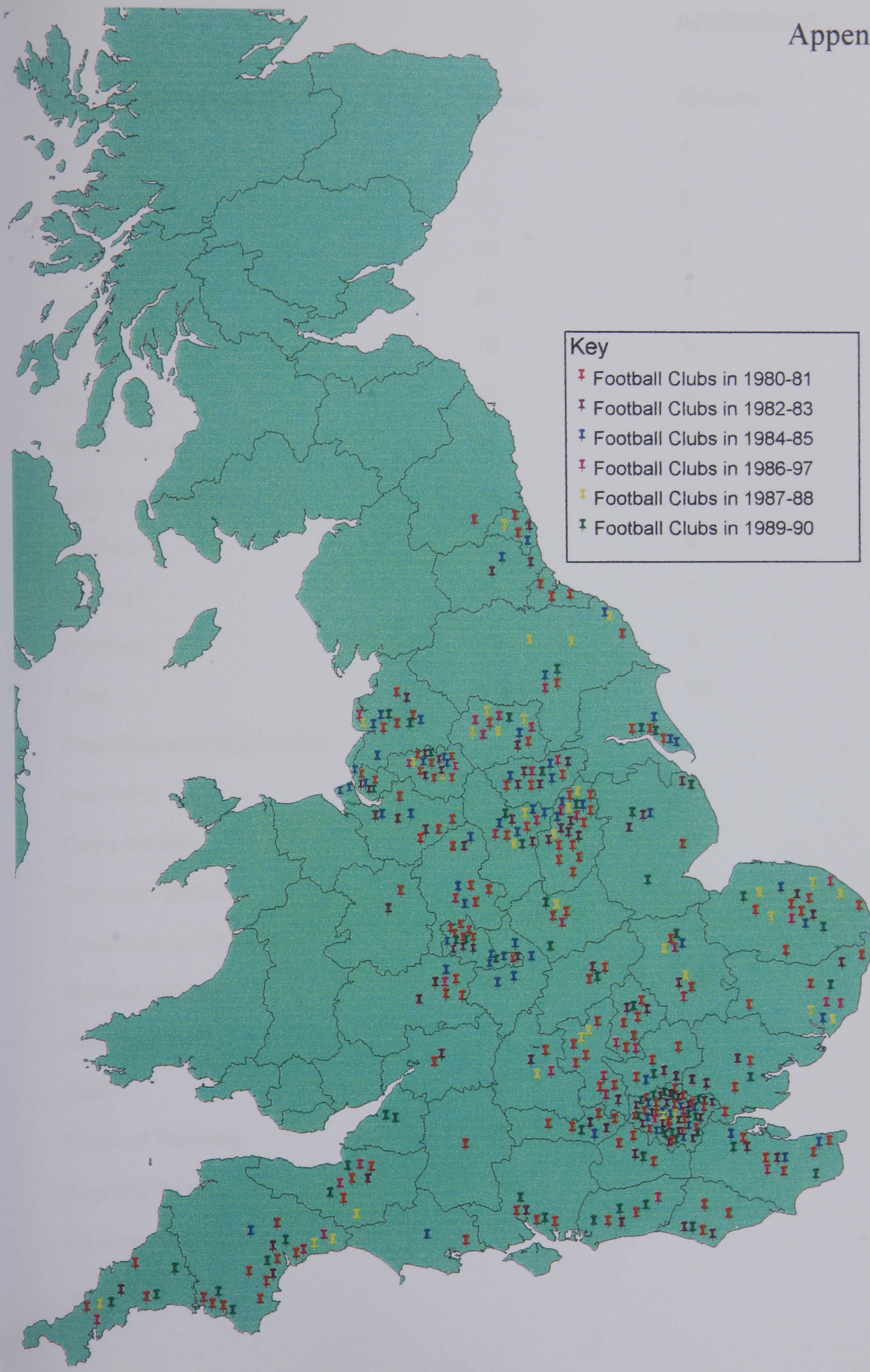
Women's football clubs registered with the WFA in England in season 1987-88

Appendix I



Women's football clubs registered with the WFA in England in season 1989-90

Appendix J



APPENDIX K

Non-elite teams surveyed	**Issued**	**Returns**
Bronte Ladies	15	1
Burton Albion	15	5
Cannock Chasers	15	4
Coventry	15	7
ES Barwell	15	8
Hemsworth	15	6
Milton Keynes	15	8
Notts Constabulary	15	4
Sheffield	15	3
Tamworth	15	7
Wakefield	15	3
Total	150	56
First Division/Premiership		
Bath WFC	15	2
Derby County	15	4
Doncaster Belles	15	10
Loughborough Students	15	5
Middlesborough	15	3
Newcastle WFC	15	5
Total	90	29
England Training	15	5
England Trials	15	5
FA Coaching Course	15	4

Appendix L

A very young Jenny Harris (eating an apple before kick off).
Player with Dick, Kerr Ladies later Preston.
One of the first pictures of a woman wearing an England jersey circa 1920.

Appendix M

Dick, Kerr Ladies later Preston circa 1916

Appendix N

Bennett's Munitionettes London circa 1918

Appendix O
Scottish team circa 1914-18

Appendix P

England XI versus France XI 1949

The tall, dark player standing in the centre is Lily Parr. The blonde player to the right as we look at the photo is Joan Whalley.

Q You mentioned on the TV programme that you began just kicking a ball about, so what are your earliest memories of playing football?

A Just playing football in the street with the lads in such a tiny space. When I, we, used to go back and look where I used to live, there used to be about 20 of us cause streets were so small then. When you had a community you wonder how so many people lived in such a small area and we used to play on concrete and chuck yourself just in the street or a place where there's a bit of grass...(pause) We played centring or heading, bringing in stuff like that and I always played out me tree. I had always like heard people talk about the 'Dick Kerr' team...(pause) About this mysterious woman's football team. I never saw them but heard there was this legend in Preston and I remember playing on the park and people saying "You know, you've got more ideas than all these lads" and just that. That's it really, just playing all over the place.

Q Were you the only girl or were there other girls or didn't you think about it?

A I never even thought about it, I was probably the only girl who played with the lads round our way - yeah it's funny – I've never even given that a thought until you just asked - yeah, no I think there were just me.

Q A lot of the elite footballers, women footballers, talk about being a tomboy but that's not a recollection you had. You were just yourself?

A I suppose I was a tomboy but I just, I were just one er, we all went out together. There were just the lads that I grew up with and that's just how I was. If they went out about playing football, I went. I never thought of it.

Q And was it always football? Or was there cowboys and indians and all that?

A Yeah we did all that - Japs and Commandos - all that and going on canal and swinging on trees and stuff.

Q Football was just part of it?

A Yeah it was just part of it because that's what you did...going riding on your bike, fishing on canal with jam jar and nets, all that kind of stuff cause that's just what we did.

Q So that was with boys of your own age, school friends and their friends. What about elder brothers and sisters, younger brothers and sisters?

A I've got an elder sister but she's 10 years older than me and we were chalk and cheese in lots of ways - our (name)'s a lady if you will and I am just me, you know, "What you see is what you get" - that's it. But she never played. I used to go to her house every Saturday - she got married. I was only 8 when she left home and got married and every Saturday I would go to her house and I remember as I was getting older our Saturday night ritual were Match of the Day. We all watched it as a family, so she is interested in football.

Q But she never encouraged you to become a player?

A Oh no, no.

Q And also not in your circle of friends, quite a lot older?

A Yes 10 years older and married at 18 and left home...(pause) So certainly a lot different to my life.

Q What about at school then?

A Well they wouldn't let us play at school it wasn't lady like.

Q OK.

A But now and again we would play in the school yard at secondary school. I don't remember playing cowboys & indians or..oh no. Cause we had separate school yards, you know?

Q Did you?

A Lads were in one schoolyard on one side of school. It was a mixed school but playgrounds were on separate sides, so I'd be playing The Big Ship Sails through the Alley Alley O' and all that stuff. So, yeah, I didn't play from about junior to secondary. We didn't really bother in the school. Perhaps me and (name) might have had a kick about now and again, but it wasn't sort of encouraged. We had to play hockey and netball.

Q Did you like hockey and netball?

A I just didn't like the game. I'd rather be kicking, rather than, you know, it felt strange handling a ball?

Q School was probably the first time that you can remember being discouraged from playing football?

A I wouldn't say we were discouraged but we weren't encouraged. It just wasn't on the agenda so you just accepted that, because that's how it was.

Q And what about talk about football in your family. Like, if you had watched Match of the Day on a Saturday night - did you talk about it after?

A Oh yes, we talked about it, we used to laugh about it cause me sister had always said, 'What is off side?'... You know, with me sort of like talking like that but we would talk about the game what a good game it was or stuff like that.

Q So, in your family it was fine for you to express your opinion about football?

A Oh yeah, never been any opposition, even when I started to play. I remember before I joined a woman's football team we had a charity do. I think it was the over 40's V the under 40's at the factory that I worked in at the time. I must have been the only girl playing, and me Dad came to watch ...(laugh) and I remember I were tackling this bloke and brought him down and he swore at me and it was all good part. But I don't think he liked the fact that a woman had tackled him cause I slid, in took the ball away and he fell, and he like came out with these expletives. I said, 'Dad have you heard him? He's swearing at me' (laugh)...and I remembered that and I remember playing

another charity thing but that was a women's game for a pub team it was only a one off. It was nothing other than the one day. Then there was like this buzz of energy. Well I remember Preston Northend ladies in the late 60's, thinking I'd like to be part of that but didn't know how to go about it and then some friends of mine played for Peter Craig. I went along and joined and played with them for a season or two and then Preston Dolphins, as they were called then, Preston Rangers, Preston Northend as they are now, they asked me to go and play for them.

Q How long had the Peter Craig team been going?

A Only a couple of years - its part of the Littlewoods Group. Some of the girls that played I used to go to school with, secondary school. Huge back up for me because I used to know a lot of people. We used to have some good laughs, they were all in pub teams in those days; there were Wheatsheaf Inn, Rimton Diamonds and Paper Dolls from Kendal.

Q That's the kind of thing I am very interested in, the kinds of teams that there are. Ally Melling's found a lot of teams based in munitions works or related to miners strikes, usually for charity. So the Peter Craig thing is quite interesting, because I guess a lot of those girls would have clerical jobs then?

A Yes, yes.

Q The pub teams are interesting because I wonder how they would have worked? Would they be girlfriends of guys who went to the pub or just collections of women who would meet one another in the pub or...

A I don't know.

Q You don't know?

A You know when I started with Peter Craig they were all ready established. They'd been playing for, I don't know how long. I think the North West league was formed in 1969 or 71. I've got all this stuff somewhere if I'd known you wanted that I could have dug it out.

Q Yes.

A Prince Arthur, that was another club er Preston Dolphins but they started as a pub club team with the GPO. So I think that was the nucleus probably was that they were pub teams, Peter Craig's maybe were an exception. Paper Dolls - I don't know, I don't know where they came from I just know they were in Kendal.

Q I could always find that out.

A Possibly yes.

Q Can you remember others?

A The North West league started doing lists of all the clubs that were affiliated and all the people who were involved. I did have it and I know I've still got it but I've failed to get hold of one from somewhere cause I've moved a couple of times since then.....

Q Oh yes, I know exactly what its like....

A I know I've got stuff up in the loft but I don't know if I've got the list. I don't remember seeing it....

Q Ok well, I can follow that up. Accepted knowledge is, it was England winning the World Cup in 1966 that sparked an interest in women wanting to play football. Do you think that's right?

A Probably. I think that is a big point because I used to be all over place playing football on all the parks in Preston wherever we went and I certainly never saw an organised women's team until I saw Preston Northend...I remember seeing them on the park opposite Digdale, it must have been about 1968 cause (name) got into coaching. Like I can put you in touch with (name), she's running Preston Northend Ladies, well second lot today, and she played, probably at the beginning.

Q Yes that would be useful.

A She would be able to tell you more about when they started and why, cause I can remember seeing them training and playing against each other. Cause I was having a fight with my boyfriend at the time and we was having a kick-about. Then we saw them and we were watching them, so it must have been about 68. So, given the fact that they would have had to get organised, get a kit and all that together, it probably was the World Cup. Yes.

Q Ok, so you went with Peter Craig's and then you moved to Preston Dolphins, what kind of memories do you have of playing at that time?

A Brilliant – loved it!

Q Fun?

A Yes - absolute fun but we always wanted to beat Blackpool Seabirds...were one of the teams and Preston Northend because they were the best and we were a good side but we weren't the best. But Blackpool Seabirds had (name) playing for them and she had just...she played in the first England International and they came back and we were playing them on our pitch up on Davon Bridge...and in my footballing life there's two games, two games that really stick out...when you think you haven't put a foot wrong all day.

Q (Laugh) Yes?

A And one was against Blackpool Seabirds and I was marking (name). Well I was on the toilet for ages, I don't know how long before I played, but because she was as hard as nails was (name), you know? We ended up playing in the same team...she played for Preston Rangers like for years but then obviously she was a lot younger and she really was...It was muscles on a stick, honest, I never saw her fall over.

Q Never?

A Never, I've never, only once when we played "Asen" – this huge girl...cause she, like, bumped into her, she knocked her on the floor and (name) was so amazed and none of us could believe it. Her expression was so funny I can

still see it, but this day, our Manager at the time said start playing fullback and he said "You're marking (name)". So I was quite nervous about it but she didn't win anything all first half, she never got past me once and wherever she went I followed her and second half they swapped her position. So Frank moved me and we just kept her out. I think we made a draw that day...think we drew one a piece. And that was a really good team performance and I just felt on top of the world that I had marked this player who'd played for England and she didn't do anything...and the other one was when we went down to Southampton in the FA Cup and we played Southampton and we lost 2-0 but we played really, really well. I was marking (name). I think wherever she went, I followed her and I got an award for most outstanding performance of the season that year and I remember one of the girls on the touchline saying to me, 'Do you know who you are marking?' And I said 'no' and she said it's (name) and I said 'I don't care who it is, she's not going to get past me. (laugh). I followed her everywhere and I think (name0 scored a goal, but I don't think (name) did. But I felt that, you know, when I used to play I was never a brilliant player. I used to watch people like (name0 who were in our team and they'd got natural ability...I don't feel that I had that but I, I felt that if a right winger was going to get past me they would have to be good. So I believed that I was alright to stop her and I was just a grafter really, but those two games were the ones that I remember most, but I felt that you would like to play like that every week.

Q Yes, that would be great. So what are the features of being part of the team? Were there nicknames - that sort of thing? Did you have any particular routines as a team?

A No, I don't remember any nicknames we just wanted to play football like everybody did. Nobody came to watch us or anything but we just wanted to play and then we got a new manager, I played my best football under Frank - he brought out the best in me. We got this other manager who really turned the team round - the same team but he was a fitness fanatic and he really worked us hard. I remember we beat Preston Northend 5 – 1 in 1981, early 81. I knew that was the turning point, that we'd done it after all those years of being in the shadow because they still had the run of us...and then we went on and I think we did the double. We got to the semi-final of Women's FA Cup with the same people, and then, when we got good, then some of the other

better players wanted to come and play for us and it changed then. Cause it was us that were a unit...and it really...1982-83 was the best time because we did everything together. We trained twice a week, we'd play on a Sunday, we'd socialise. It was a really, really special time and when I talk to the people who played then we all felt the same, and it really was special, and we lost it for whatever reason...(long pause) I think people get too big for their boots sometimes and spoil it. That was the best time - I look back on that fondly and I got player of the club award and I got Manager's player of the year and I got lots of club awards because I just thought myself into wanting our team to be the best. (tape turned off)

Appendix R

Postcards of women's footba

teams circa 1921-23

STOKE-ON-TRENT FOOTBALL TEAM.

Q What are your earliest memories of playing football?

A I always used to kick the ball about when I was young, so it started from there.

Q How old were you then?

A About four or five. I just went down for training every Saturday morning and played for the boys' team until I was about nine. Then that was when the FA started complaining and saying I couldn't play because the lads were too strong.

Q Have you got any brothers?

A Yeah, I would say my brother influenced me the most, 'cause he used to play for the same boys team and I used to watch him play and think that's what I want to do.

Q So he's older than you?

A Yeah, he's twenty-nine, so there's eleven years difference. It grew from there watching him play.

Q Are you a footballing family?

A I was playing for Ayr United and the manager for St. Helens came down to watch. I just played tournaments really, that was from nine to about fourteen.

Q St. Helens? Was that a women's team?

A Yeah, it was sort of the under-fifteens, fourteens team. I played for The School of Excellence, which is all boys again.

Q You actually got picked for the Boys' School of Excellence?

A Yeah, I played for a season, which was good.

Q Did you ever feel the odd one out?

A Sometimes, like when you had to get changed, I used to get changed after the refs, but apart from that they made me feel at home and treated me like one of the lads – it was ok.

Q What about at school?

A They made me play netball, they put it in a way like you can either practice football and not play any games, or you can practice netball and play games. So I had to choose netball really, I still used to train with the lads but I played netball as well.

Q Yeah, there is that weird thing where you can train but not play competitively against the opposite sex.

A Yeah, not even a friendly or anything. So I just used to play in the playground with the lads. Once I played for the school team, but there were complaints from the opposite team, 'cause they said, 'They've got an advantage 'cause my son won't tackle a girl', so it got stopped. Yeah, that's what I mean.

Q You didn't score in that game then? It would have been good if you had!

A Not in that one. I scored in some games.

Q So you represented your school in netball?

A At netball - yeah.

Q Athletics and things too, because you're fast?

A Well, when I went to secondary school, I used to do athletics and hockey and again played netball, I just tried everything. But at the weekends I still used to play football, but I did try it all.

Q Did you represent your school for any of those?

A I used to be in the athletics [team], and did the 400m and javelin. Then I was the captain of the hockey team, I played netball and that was it.

Q You must also be quite academic, you've just done your A-Levels?

A It's been quite difficult this year, cause like with my GCSE's it was ok, as I wasn't playing for England then, I was just in and out of the team. But with A-Levels I was away for weeks at a time, so I'm just waiting for the results now and hopefully passing them.

Q So what do you see yourself doing then?

A Hopefully a PE teacher, coach or something to do with sport or leisure, cause I like to teach, I like to coach. That would be good. So go to university and do a degree in sports studies and then go on for a year teaching.

Q You don't fancy going to America or anything like that? On a scholarship?

A I've had three or four offers from various universities and I have thought about it because it is a big thing over there, but I just feel that the Americans are stealing our players which I don't like. But it is a great opportunity – it's a tough one. If you look at their prospectuses compared to ours it's unbelievable.

Q It's a different way of thinking about it?

A It was probably the best game we played and that. I only came on as a sub, so it wasn't really the football, it was the atmosphere, cause we played at a stadium with about a 15,000 capacity and it was full. Before we all came out there was fireworks and everything, they made a big deal of it out there. We were watching adverts on the telly, like we would have Alan Shearer over here, they had Mia Hamm – she was getting paid so much money for it.

Q So you don't know whether you want to go to America?

A No, it's a great opportunity and I would like it to happen over here, cause I'm a home-bird and would like to stay. If it happened over here I would definitely do it, cause you play football everyday, you get your qualifications as well as playing football, so it's good.

Q I've heard some criticism about how it's unfair about Kelly Smith actually going to America, cause their seasons are different from ours and she's not fit at the time when we play our England games.

A I think its only two months a year the season, but they apparently are training all year round, you do weight training and a lot of long distance running, cause they're very big on fitness over there. They are training all year round, so she should be fit when she comes back to England. The only problem there is I would say is that she can't get time off to play certain England games, cause she's got to play for them or has work which has to be handed in. She has to wait until the term's finished before she can come over.

Q You can really see two sides to the point can't you? Someone like you or Coulthard, maybe even Hope Powell, what would they have given to have that opportunity?

A Gill always says that is her main regret not playing abroad.

Q So when you were little did you used to collect all the memorabilia to do with football or did you just play?

A I used to have the sticker books and things; I support Everton so I would have Everton posters all over the wall.

Q Anything else?

A The little medals for the different players, I used to have little things like that. I used to have anything to do with football.

Q Your bedroom was quite footbally then?

A Yeah.

Q I was reading that for the next World Cup they're going to make Mia Hamm Barbie dolls, can you believe it?

A Oh no! I can believe that.

Q I can't decide whether that's a good thing, or a bad thing or just odd!

A Just odd I would say!

Q So you still had all that other paraphernalia, you had all your Barbie dolls and that kind of thing?

A No, I liked teddies, but not really dolls. Mum did try! I never really sat still long enough to play with them.

Q What about your other family members, aunts and uncles, was it mainly sporty stuff they got you?

A Yeah, badminton or tennis rackets, or something I could play with.

Q So you think that when they think of you, for birthdays or the like, they always get something to do with sport?

A Yeah, that or clothes, as I like clothes.

Q What would you say your best subjects at school were?

A It's got to be PE of course.

Q What were your A-Levels?

A Psychology and PE. I did originally do biology, so yeah I like science, chemistry and biology. But I had to drop biology cause I didn't have enough time.

Q Why did you pick psychology and biology?

A Cause they went well with PE and would help me to become a teacher or things alone those lines.

Q It seems from early on that you wanted to go on to some kind of teaching or coaching.

A Well it started off really, as I taught the first year students for football when I was a third or four year – girls and boys, they just asked me one day. And it used to be good seeing them progress from not being able to kick a ball to being able to kick a ball. Playing in their first match to like their fifth match and comparing them, it was really good like that. So it's originally from there. I did a work experience where I taught at a primary school and I enjoyed that.

Q So you just find it rewarding to see the progression?

A Yeah.

Q You said the school asked you, but how did you find the boys reacted to you?

A At first, they were like 'a girl can't teach us' but then after I did skills with them, they were, 'Oh she can do that', and a lot of them knew me anyway from the local team, so most of them were ok with it. But the ones that didn't know me, thought 'girls can't play football'.

Q Have you ever had that when you've been playing with boys and they've tried to injure you in tackle?

A Sometimes I'd say go in a bit harder and they think a girl can't take me on and they try their hardest to tackle you. I play football on a Friday night with the teachers at school, it's like the sixth form versus the teachers and a couple of times when you've taken a teacher on they're trying to tackle you more than they probably would do a lad. But never injured me – no.

Q Tell me about how you first got picked for England?

A It was just from playing X, we were in the Northern division and (name), a scout, was watching and put my name forward. Apparently you have to have 10 good consecutive solid performances before they put your name forward, and I was just on standby at first, well for a while really. Then he called me up for a training session, then I got in from there. I trained with them and they brought me in. So that's it really, they just send scouts out, or maybe a manager or another England player would put your name forward. That also helps, like if you played against Doncaster Belles and Gill was playing, then she may put in a good word about how you played – which helps.

Q They're trying to make it more structured now aren't they? So that may be different in the future?

A Yeah, they are. They're trying to have under 16 away teams, which I think will be better as progression is like all the top ones have. Germany, Sweden, America – they all have a progression up, whereas we all seem to get thrown in the deep end. Maybe we should be playing for the under 18's first, cause the nerves you go through before you play a women's game are unbelievable, on my first game I was really nervous.

Q Can you remember your first game then?

A It was against Germany, I was on the bench and I remember my name being called out, I was really nervous. I wasn't really watching the game, I was just in awe of sitting on the bench with my England shirt on, I didn't think I would play. Then Kelly Smith went down injured she was playing left wing back and I was thinking 'Please get up, please get up' and she stayed down injured and wasn't able to carry on. I was thinking 'Oh no what am I going to do?' I wanted to get on and play but I was nervous, I was told to warm up, so was warming up nervous as anything. Then I was standing on the line and he said 'Are you ready to go?' and I said 'Yeah, yeah' – and he said 'Well you better take your sub-suit off first', so I took that off and just went on. I was really nervous, I remember Hope Powell was along side me playing left-mid-field and she just talked me through the whole game which really helped me along. Then I scored on my début, which was brilliant.

Q Could you believe that you had scored?

A I didn't know what to do, I just went mad!

Q When you were nervous, did the feelings go away as soon as you got the ball?

A Yeah, as soon as you go on the pitch you've got to forget your nerves. I think Hope Powell got me through it more than anything, she was just telling me what to do, cause I was like 'What do I do when I get the ball?' Cause I didn't really get the ball that much, I remember being on for 5 minutes and feeling shattered and thinking 'I'm not going to last'. You get into it and its ok though.

Q What games stick out in your mind since then?

A It's got to be the game against Holland, when we beat Holland one nil. Cause I scored in that game, but to be honest I think that was one of my worst games like for actually playing. There were a lot of players who played really well in that game but I didn't really get into it. I made a lot of mistakes but I ended up scoring, it was all in the papers – which was funny.

Q How does it make you feel when you see your name in the paper?

A You can't believe it really, it's a good feeling. The little kids ask you for your autograph and things, and you get to do presentations, and that's good with the kids when they ask you how you managed to play for England. It's good, when the little kids look up to you and want to play for England.

Q Is anyone at school or college being horrible about it?

A No, they're brilliant, like my teachers have been really good with giving me time off school. Every time I play for England, they put the paper article up in the sixth form common room, they're all really good. The lads always give me a round of applause when I come in, it's good.

Q How do you not change then?

A You have to remember that I see the mistakes, whereas everybody else just sees the success, so I've always got that to look at. I never remember the good things; I always remember the bad things of a game.

Q Is that how you visualise a game?

A Yeah, by remembering the bad things. I remember when I score of course. I don't know whether that's a good thing or a bad thing, its good in a way cause you keep wanting to get better. Cause the people that are a bit cocky, but then I don't think anyone at England is though.

Q I managed to get an invitation from a doctor to go along, I suppose you had read the 'Belles' Book, have you not read it?

A No I haven't, I've heard about it, and I've seen the film and things but I've never read the book.

Q In it, he's pretty horrible about Ted Copeland and Graham and people like that, about how strict they are and things like that. In general how do you see the England training camp?

A What now or before?

Q Before, cause you would have been to the first new one last week wouldn't you?

A Yeah. They were strict on time, and strict on what you ate and things like that, but I would say that was fair, you need to be on time and have certain restrictions on your diet, so I would say that was fair. If you made a mistake instead of saying, you're unlucky you've done this, they would shout at you and maybe put you down a bit. I remember the first time I went out I was a bit home sick, but I sorted it out. Sometimes you were just left out, but things weren't explained to you, so you were left thinking you weren't good enough and that's why you had been left out. I never really had a bad word to say about him cause he got me in there and gave me a chance, but the training camp was strict.

Q Did it?

A Yeah, because normally a week drags on, but it flew. I don't know whether it was because the boredom just wasn't there cause you train morning and afternoon but the training sessions were spread out and the meetings weren't so long, it was really enjoyable. If you made a mistake then she would take you to one side and say this is what you've done wrong and this is how to do it right, which is what you need. She was really good, but likewise she was strict with certain things like food and being on time, but I think that's fair enough. I think the togetherness in the team was good, there was a good team spirit yesterday. I think Hope got that going, cause she has been there and she understands the pressures that you go under when you are there and she tries to stop them. She tries to make them better I suppose.

Q I can understand that you've got to have a distance, if you're going to be a coach, you can't be friends with everyone.

A That's what Hope Powell says cause she is friends with a lot of them but she often says that. Like when's she's a manager she's a manager and they're a player. She's really good mates with Sammy Britton, who's in the team at the minute and she says Sammy is a great mate of mine, but when we're here Sammy's a player and I'm a manager and its going to have to stay like that. But again she can still get on with people. She has got the distance, but she's still.....You can't really judge her on the first game, you've got to give her a few games and what ever. Then we went back to our rooms.

Q Can you explain the programme of the day, cause I have an idea of the kind of thing that Ted organised, what would Hope's be like?

A We could have a lay-in if we wanted, she would look to see if the players were tired and she give us a lay-in, say instead of getting up at 8 o'clock, she would say get up at nine, which is sometimes better. Because with Ted, you had to get up at a certain time each morning, no matter how tired players were. So to start off with, we had to get up at 8 o'clock, we would have our breakfast, we would go for a training session, go for lunch and then go for a training session in the afternoon, then do what you want. Go swimming, sauna, then maybe have a meeting at night. But she would look to see how

tired players were. She would ask us, it was a two-way thing, and she would say 'Are you feeling tired, would you like a lay-in in the morning?' She would give us an extra half hour, extra hour. Which is sometimes what you need, you need a little more rest. That was the day basically. But in between we could do what we wanted sort of thing,

Q Did you notice any major personnel changes?

A Nearly all the management has changed, like the physio. We have a new physio, Gill, she seems to really know her job and be really dedicated. I think she's more than a physio, she does an all round thing.

Q I met a lady like that when I did my coaching, does she do acupuncture and the whole lot?

A She might do yeah.

Q I wonder if it's the same lady.

A She really knows what she's on about, and as soon as you're injured she's right there on the spot, which is good, and she will never leave you and say 'Oh you'll be alright'. She always looks until she finds the answer to it, she's really good. Cause in the past people used to go to the doctor instead of the physio, you were frightened to approach the physio because of what they may say. The doctor stayed, Charlotte – she's lovely, and there was another one there – Mary, who was really nice as well. We've got a new coach in as well, he's really nice as well.

Q Did you notice anything different tactically?

A Yeah, she's more attacking than defending. She's more of a winner, she wants us to go out there and win.

Q I said that earlier about Germany, cause once the goal had gone in, everybody had to come back and defend.

A That's what happened, cause you were frightened to go forward in case you forgot your defensive position, but she's like go forward and defend if you have to. She says we all look frightened on the ball, like we're a bit nervous. So she's going for more a Brazilian style, being able to control the ball wherever it comes and being comfortable with the ball. Hopefully it will work, I think attacking is a better angle to take.

Q It was quite frustrating against Germany because one or two would go forward then there would be no support for the crossing.

A I would say Mick Bates was brilliant. He started it off I would say. I think he was a psychologist as well, cause he got us all believing we could win I think we had forgotten how to win. I think that's still around, I think we need to know how to win.

Q Even against Holland or did you think that was a fluke?

A Yeah – well it was really, cause we didn't really believe that we could win. You need a bit of luck as well.

Q It was a really bad group to be drawn in as well.

A Yeah, we've got to win this, we've got to play some playoff's to stay in the 'A-band' of football. If we get beaten we go in to the B-band, so we can only play teams like Scotland, we won't play the world's top teams, which is bad for women's football.

Q I saw the game against Scotland up at Sheffield, what was it? Five nil or something like that. You felt sorry for Scotland in a way.

A I don't feel like we should be in the B-band at all, I think we need a bit of luck to do it. It is hard though, some of these countries are training every single day.

Q So it's a really big deal for you to play for your country. How do you see the difference between playing for your country and playing for your club?

A I don't really know. Just to put on an England shirt and play in front of bigger crowds than you do for your club. It's the best feeling in the world to play and represent your country. It feels like you're doing a job not just for yourself, but for other people, whereas for your club it's more like your playing to enjoy it.

A Steven, my manager gave me the chance to play for X, which meant I could be picked for England from there. A lot of clubs aren't interested in younger players, they want experienced players, whereas he just gave me the chance young. So it was him that started the ball rolling. Playing for your country is just unbelievable; I would love to do it every week. It makes you look better, when you're playing with those ten players around you, cause everyone works for you. When you go back to X, you sort of play a different game. With England you've got to stick to your positions, but with X you can go wherever really, just run round and score. So it is difficult going from one to the other.

Q Is it ever a relief to come back and play for X? Or do you prefer the challenge of playing for England?

A That's a tough one. I do like that challenge. If you were playing for X against a lower side, you wouldn't feel like you'd achieve anything. But if you were playing for England, say against Germany, which are European champions, then you feel like you've achieved something if you beat them, your goals' been achieved. It is a relief sometimes to come home and just play instead of having to do a certain job.

Q Do you still play on Friday's with the teachers and things like that?

A Yeah, I do that. If the lads on our estate are around I just go over and play, I just love to play football anyway.

Q You never feel played out or anything like that?

A Oh, no, no, I could play all the time I could.

Q So hypothetically if there were a professional league in England would you like to do that for a living?

A Definitely, I would love to do that. Instead of having to do a job you're not really keen on and having to train after your job.

Q Some really intelligent players have had to accept factory jobs, just so they know it gives them nine to five, so they can go train afterwards and have their weekends free. You couldn't be Policewoman etc.

A Yeah, there's a lot of people who could go into a lot better jobs but they have to do factory work, or be unemployed, because the jobs they've got won't give them the time off they need.

Q You have to pick your job to suit your sport?

A Yeah, yeah. I would say that a lot of people are put off playing for England or football because they've got to arrange everything around football and have really got to want to do it.

Q Could you describe for me, your average training week, what would you have to do to fit your training in?

A Well when I was at school, I would train at school, exercise like the aerobic-type, bleep test. Then I would do some sprints with some of the lads, because some of the lads play football. So I would go through school like that or if I didn't have a lesson I would just go for a run. Then after school I would train with X. But now that I'm off school, I try to train as much as I can everyday. I train in the morning and then do whatever in the afternoon, or vice versa. So I would try and train everyday, say fitness one day, sprint work the other – trying to vary it. A mixture of long runs, sprints, weights – not heavy weights just to tone up, then working with the ball, running with the ball, shooting, crossing.

Q So how many hours a week would you estimate that you spend training?

A Well some weeks I have to push myself more then others.....

Q So you have to fit your training schedule around what you do during the day?

A Yeah. I'm off school at the moment, so its ok, but with school its quite difficult, I would have a free period where I should have been working, but I'll go out for a run.

Q Do you prefer running than training?

A No, not really, I just like to play with ball all the time, if you could get fit playing football all the time I would, that's what I like to do. But I know you've got to do long distance running, unless you're doing it with a mate then its boring just running round. I've got a job, so I fit it in and around that, seeing friends.

Q Are a lot of your friends into football?

A Not really, I've got football mates from Tranmere, Everton, Liverpool which I talk to and see a bit. But my other friends aren't really into football, they watch it but they don't play, they're into sport but not really football. They understand that I am away a lot. It's a big step from playing for your club to international level; they expect you to know the terms and what you have to do. If you haven't been taught then you're not going to know, I'm still learning the basics now.

Q So injuries then, you're such an active person, do you get injuries?

A I do get injured, I've hurt my ankle, both of my ankles, I've twisted them. I think I've done my ankles so much now I'm used to it. That's probably my worst injury; I was out for a month. It was horrible having to watch and not being able to play. I came back a bit too soon though, I kept thinking about it whilst I was playing and it wasn't good. I've had little twinges, I've pulled a muscle in my calf, but that's about it really.

Q But no real serious injuries even when you've been training?

A I broke my arm when I was little, but that was nothing to do with football, that was when I fell of a ladder. I've had bangs to my head...

Q ...any side effects from that?...

A ...no, not really, the ankle thing was the worse thing. I just kept doing one a season and then that weakened the other and I kept doing that one the next season, but its ok now. If you train a lot, and stretch a lot and weights then you're a lot less prone to injuries. There are a few people who are really prone to injuries, which is a shame, because you watch the men's games and there's always people injured and their great players.

Q The last section is about how much of the football culture do you take part in?

A I'm not a season ticket holder at Everton, but I do go to as many games as I can, But if we're playing away on the Sunday a long way away, then we leave on the Saturday so I can't go. I watch football on the telly all the time. If I had to choose I would prefer to play it rather then watch it, but I do like watching football as well.

Q So how will you follow the Women's World Cup in American next year?

A I don't know really, in the papers, or teletext or if it's on Sky or something I imagine. I know a few girls who are going out to watch the World Cup, making it a holiday out there to America, I would like to do that if I got the chance. We don't care who's playing, men or women, as long as its football and its on when I flick through the channels then we watch it. It used to be on Channel Four and I thought a lot of people watched that, but in general women's football is rarely on.

Q There was a good feature in The Sun, it was really nice. When Everton were doing really well in the league at the start of the year and the men's team were losing all the time. All the women were just in their training gear, just standing around and they looked good.

A They did another good article in the North West, saying the men's team are losing and the women are probably going to win the league and they showed highlights from when we played Iceland and I thought that was good. The Insurance company AXA have just sponsored the men's game, but now their sponsoring the women's league and the women's FA cup, which hopefully should pump money into the game and give them a little more money. If Sky

keep showing the World Cup like they said they will, that should increase the publicity.

Q You speak to a lot of girls over here and they don't know who Mia Hamm is?

A That's because they just play it for fun they don't read about football or watch it.

Q You don't get 'Women's Soccer World'?

A We get 'On the Ball', I just get it for support really. It's getting better.

Q Have you read any books which have been written about women's football, like 'In a League of Their Own'?

A No, I just don't read books really though, I imagine if I did I would go for something like that.

Q Who are your hero's?

A Steve MacManaham at the moment and Ryan Giggs, for present players. For past players probably Maradonna or Pele. For the women's game it's got to be Marianne Spacey. I just remember when I was younger and we went to the Women's FA Cup and she scored two blinding goals and I remember watching and thinking, yeah she's a great player. I remember when we played Arsenal and she's always been my heroine, and I had just been getting into the England team and at the end of us playing she came up to me and said 'Well done Sue'. I was pleased that she knew my name. Everyone's good and helpful and try to help me along, by giving me little pointers.

Q Why do you think that is?

A Cause they love it and if I don't carry on then that's it. They want England to do well so they help the youngsters. I think most of them will go onto be coaches when they've finished cause they've got it in the blood.

Q What do you think football has given you?

A Team work, which is good for jobs and going out into the community and working as a team. It gives you leadership qualities, which increases your confidence, which is also good for jobs. Your confidence is boosted as you have to stand up and say what you think and feel. Being able to live alone, cause your Mum isn't there to do everything for you. But when you're living alone or with another person who's in the same boat as you, you got to be able to tidy up and be on time. Travelling also, you get to see a lot of the world.

Q What sort of places have you recently been to?

A Norway, Italy, Germany, Scotland, France, Belgium – it's good to visit all these countries and see the lifestyles and foods. Their cultures are completely different. It's so much bigger in other countries, as soon as you get off the planes people are there saying, 'There's the England Women's football team'. You go to press conferences and all sorts over there, which you don't get over here at all. Well, you do get the odd one and that.

Q What would you say it's taken away from you – what's the downside?

A Your social life really, cause you're training all the time and if you're not training you're playing or sleeping. If you go out to a club, you're drinking orange juice because you've got to be up early for a game and things like that I miss out on. Luckily I've got a boyfriend who loves football and is very understanding. I'm willing to sacrifice all that for the football. The other thing is being away from home.

Q Do you keep any mementos or scrapbooks?

A I try to keep everything. I give away my England shirts, I've only kept one of each number.

Q Who do you give them away to?

A Friends and family or who ever asks. I would never ask anyone if they want a shirt, I would wait until they ask me. I've given some to my team and my

friends from school. I gave one to my first manager, I framed that one. That was my first ever England shirt cause I always said if I ever played for England you're getting my first shirt – he was in tears. Then I gave one to my second manager as well. So I've got one of each number and that's about it really.

Q If I was to go into your front room at home would I know that there was an England player living in this house?

A Yeah, there's photos on the walls of me and other players.

Q So at a guess how many 'item's' of memorabilia do you have?

A Trophies, pedants, bags of medals, photos – loads of different things for first appearances and best player and stuff.

Q Can you ever see a time when men and women will play football together?

A I don't think we're ever play together, purely because of the physical aspect, I don't think women could compete with men physically. I would say technically some women are as good as men, but it's the physical aspect, there would just end up being too many injuries and that sort of thing. I would like to see a time when women got paid the same as men did, maybe not as silly as some men with millions of pounds. But enough to enable them not to work as well. Even a couple of hundred quid a week for training would be nice at the end of the day.

Q Is that your dream?

A Yeah, I would like to see that in about 5, 10 years time.

Q Professional league?

A Professional and semi-professional league. Over here its just a men's game, it's our national sport, and people believe that men should be playing football and women shouldn't. But over in America its not, they've got American Football and Baseball, so they think it's a girl's sport and let them play.

Q Have you ever been approached by Reebok or anyone for sponsorship?

A No, but I'm going to write off to some companies and ask them, even if I just get a pair of boots or something, it all helps. A few of the players in the England team have done that and got free pairs of boots and stuff.

Q If they were going to go for someone in the England team they would go for you!

A Yeah, thanks!

Q Is there anything you would like to ask me?

A No I think we've covered everything. The talent which is around now is unbelievable. From when I first started its changed so much, it's amazing. I think the talent's always been there but it hasn't been allowed to come out until recently.

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